MAMALLAPURAM

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DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY
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FOREWORD

This is my third book on Mahabalipuram. Every time I visit the site I perceive new beauties, new vistas. A European visitor wrote in 1811, 'I have often visited Mahabalipuram, but on this present visit I found new objects of admiration and all presented novel aspects to my eyes'. I trust that this new book of mine reflects my accessions of knowledge and experience.

Apart from studying the art of the monuments, the book provides an account of the site, called Mamallapuram in place of the totally unhistorical 'Mahabalipuram', from the days, two millennia ago, when it was a port, to the present century. This history is conceived in the sense of studies by scholars of the problems the art and the annals have given rise to and of impressions formed by visitors who were not scholars.

Mamallapuram's history is notable for the irruption, if it may be called so, of foreigners at three different times. They came as sailors and merchants in the first instance and secondly as antiquarians. They now appear as tourists. In this Mamallapuram is unique among Indian historical sites.

Mamallapuram is also notable for the fact that its monuments attracted a number of foreign artists. About a dozen of them visited the site in the last two centuries. This is a little known chapter in Mamallapuram's history.

I have not encumbered the pages with footnotes. Where I thought that my statements should be identified and that further comments are necessary, I have added the references at the end of the book.

The select bibliography is an indication of my indebtedness to earlier authors, many of them great and profound scholars. The modern writer on Mamallapuram is fortunate that he has a large bibliography on which to draw. Where I have ventured to differ from some of these eminent scholars, I have done so with no little diffirence, but also with full conviction.

In writing this book I have received considerable assistance from Mr R. Nagaswamy, Director of Archaeology, Government of Tamilnad, and my thanks are due to him. But he is in no way responsible for my opinions.

N. S. RAMASWAMI

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PART I

I
THE SETTING

The monuments of Mamallapuram are the most enigmatic in Indian art and among the most perplexing in the world. The origins of the Buddha image and the dating of the Gandhara sculptures have been settled in a measure. But many of the Mamallapuram problems still remain intractable after two centuries of discussion since William Chambers began it in 1788.

But, though the monuments are overlaid with scholarly contention, their art is serene. They were created in a mood of religious exaltation, in the wake of a Hindu revival against Buddhism and Jainism, which was nurtured by the songs of Appar and Sambandar. Some of the monuments illustrate literary classics. A feeling as of spiritual and literary fragrance overhangs them.

The seventh century in Pallava history was an age of excitement. It was full of wars, wars with the Badami Chalukyas, with the Pandyas, with the Gangas. At the same time there were other wars too, spiritual, intellectual, artistic. It was an age of stir and movement, somewhat like the days of Pericles in ancient Athens and of the first Elizabeth in England.

The kings set the tone. Narasimha II, who created all the Mamallapuram monuments, was a remarkable personality. He did have to fight a few wars in his long rule, which probably lasted from circa 690-691 to circa 728-729, but fighting was not his main interest as one feels it had been of his great-grandfather, Narasimha I, or of his father, Paramesvara I. He was an aesthete not only in art but also in religion. He loved to experiment in art forms and sought beauty in a variety of ways. He was an innovator. To nobody else in the long history of

Indian art did it occur to reproduce contemporary impermanent styles in imperishable rock so as to preserve them for posterity. The rathas, unique to Mamallapuram, are a testimony to his questing spirit. He also wished to have a few passages of literature illustrated in sculpture, and the results have exceeded all expectations. He virtually brought to an end the essays in rock architecture which Mahendra I had inaugurated in Tondaimandalam probably because he believed that their artistic possibilities were exhausted. He set in motion the mighty movement of structural stone temples, but not as most other kings similarly inclined would have done. He built two of them on hillocks and a third he set by the very margin of the sea.

All his art was at the service of his religion. The storm of credal contention which had filled the reign of Mahendra I had disappeared and Hinduism was triumphantly secure. The royal saint clothed its truths in the visible garb of art.

Many of Rajasimha's immediate predecessors had been great men. The one tantalising glimpse literature provides of Simhavishnu shows him to be a patron and connoisseur of music, in the story of the invitation to Damodara, a forbear of Dandin's. Simhavishnu's descendants inherited his love of the graces of life, none more so than his son. Mahendra I was dramatist, musician, philosopher and art connoisseur in addition to his statutory role of warrior. Narasimha I, the conqueror of Vatapi, was more of a General than anything else, but the winds of foreign enterprise blow through his reign.

His grandson, Paramesvara I, virtually inaugurated the building of structural stone temples in Tondainandalam, but all that is otherwise known of him indicates the warrior king. In the next reign there came to flower all the graces of art that had been instinct under the previous kings. The flowering lasted but a brief while, some two score years After Rajasimha's death the kingdom was to be plunged in anarchy, caused by dynastic disputes and foreign invasions. Though

Nandivarman Pallavamalla held back the forces of dissolution, Pallava rule was never to be the same. But the fleeting moment in history's time was enough to create Mamallapuram.

The gracefulness, the infinite variety of the monuments cannot be understood unless it is realised that they were created in an exceptional age, that they owe their origins not alone to the instinct that led to the enshrining of religious truths but also to a gay excitement which induced a considerable number of artists in Tondaimandalam to set to work, all at the same time, some to excavate shrines in rock, some to build temples of stone, some to carve huge sculptures, and some to copy in rock existing structures of perishable materials, all at a single site. There is little of this feeling about the monuments of most other dynasties. The contemporary Pandyan temples, for example, are very serviceable and even excellent, but except Kazhugumalai, they do not create the feeling that they are products of imagination on fire.

Buddhism and Jainism had been entrenched in Tondaimandalam, as in many other parts of southern India, when the Pallavas came from southern Andhra to rule at Kanchi. That the capital was a Buddhist stronghold is clear enough from "Manimekhalai" and from the careers of many other Buddhist apostles and teachers. But when Huen-tsang visited the city about 640 he found a number of "Deva" temples, indicating that Hinduism was winning the battle.

This spiritual and intellectual battle must have caused enormous excitement in the country. Its emotions can be sensed in the poems of the two Hindu protagonists, Appar and Sambandar. Each in his different way won to Hinduism two of the royal houses of the Tamil region, Appar in Kanchipuram and Sambandar in Madurai. Appar's royal proselyte had been a persecutor when a Jain. But when Mahendra I turned Hindu he liberated a feeling for art that,

under his leadership, and later, under that of Rajasimha, made the name of Pallava a venerated one in Indian art history. Great as was the work which Appar did, it proved to be greater than he could have thought.

Much about the early Pallavas is still obscure. If they were of foreign origin (the theory[1] that their mortal enmity to the Badami Chalukyas was derived from the animosity of the Arsacidae and the Sassanidae on the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris is fanciful), they accepted the Indian ethos with remarkable eagerness and transformed it into a thing of beauty. If, as is more probable, they were of indigenous stock, they assimilated the religious and art "atmosphere" around them wherever they happened to be, in the Amaravati region or in Tondaimandalam, so well that they improved upon it in every way.

The religious monuments of an age are the product of its spirit. It is necessary to appreciate what stirred the Pallava mind before one may understand the monuments it produced, particularly the unusual ones at Mamallapuram. The materials for this understanding are far from adequate. In literature there are only the two Avantisundari stories and "Nandi-kalambakam". These are of indirect utility; none of them is a "parani" or an "ula" such as those which directly illumine Chola history. Of even more indirect help are the hymns of Appar, Sambandar and Thirumangai. These are invaluable as indicating the stern struggle then in progress for the souls of men and the ultimate Hindu victory. But they do not describe the progress of that struggle. We know what the hymners thought of their cause and of their opponents. But they did not write as historians. Even the identity of the Pallava and Pandya kings they redeemed has had to be settled with some difficulty.

The inscriptions remain. The historian of the Pallava ethos is compelled to look to them for his evidence despite

the deficiencies they share with Indian epigraphs in general. Little history is to be looked for in professed panegyrics. But in the particular attributes they apply to a king something of his personality may be felt or sensed. The relevant Pallava epigraphs emphasise the soldierliness of Narasimha I and the artistic propensities of Narasimha II. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that the former was principally a conqueror and the latter mainly an art connoisseur.

The Pallava age was one of religious and intellectual stir. Men's minds were interpenetrated with the truths of Tamil and Sanskrit literatures. While Hindu icnography as a whole is based on manuals, at Mamallapuram an entire scriptural episode is illustrated in sculpture and some other passages too are exemplified in stone. Again, while many a royal conquest promoted cultural migrations, there has been no more emphatic instance[2] of this than the way in which the loveliness of the Kanchi Kailasanatha temple was taken to the banks of the Malaprabha and thence to the hills of Ellora, not to mention the heights of Kazhugumalai.

Whichever dynasty was in power, structural stone temples would have begun to be built in the Tamil region about the time they were, in fact, erected, the seventh-eighth centuries A.D. That lithic art should have taken such a long time to appear in a region always full of the artistic impulse is one of the surprises of Indian art history. Stone[3] began to be used by Asoka in northern India in the third century, B.C. and in Sri Lanka at least in the next century. But it was not until about the third century A.D. that the structural temples of Nagarjunakonda[4] appeared. In Karnataka there were structural temples by about the close of the sixth century A.D. Yet it was not till a hundred years later that the Kuram temple was built. (No conclusions can be drawn from the Gunadaraviccuram erected by Mahendra I at Tiruvadigai because it has been much restored).

But, though late in its arrival, the Tamil structural stone temple lost little time in developing. This was entirely due to Pallava enterprise and virtuosity. Apart from choosing dramatic locations for some of their temples, the Pallavas made of them things of beauty so compellingly that even a "hereditary enemy" of theirs succumbed to their charm, and nothing would satisfy him but that he must have it reproduced in a temple in his own capital, though that temple was meant to commemorate his defeat of the Pallavas. No similar event is recorded of any other Indian dynasty.

Much is to be learnt of the spirit of an age from its writers. In Pallava times men had no doubt that the Godhead was something close by. The "sthalapurana" of the Talasayana Perumal temple at Mamallapuram was written in later times to show that the Lord is, indeed, "saulabhya", easy of access to the devotee. The Lord, whom the saints of the time invoked with such fervour, was always near at hand. Thus it was that Rajasimha himself, canonised though he was to be, was once rebuked gently. The rebuke came for his vaingloriousness. Speaking in the spirit of his age, some of his subjects might have thought his momentary discomfiture a judgment on him for his three hundred and fifty honorifics carved on the Kailasanatha temple.

The story[5] is that Rajasimha fixed a day for the consecration of that temple. He was perhaps rather too proud of that achievement of his. But the Lord told him in a dream that He would not be present on the day the king had chosen because He wished to attend the consecration of another temple. The king, rather piqued that the Lord should prefer another temple to his, set out in search of it He could not find it. He then learnt that it was only a temple built in the heart of a devotee, Pusalar, but for all that important enough for the Lord to prefer to his own.

Those, then, were times in which people believed that they could be in touch with the Godhead. This was their inspiration. It was the duty of the kings to build fanes in honour of the Lord, and most of them were more than eager to discharge this responsibility. The Pallavas sought many ways of doing so. Their devotion to pious aesthetics continued till their last days when, despite a growing weakness, they built at Tiruttani an apsidal temple with superb sculpture. In art, the Pallavas went down with their flags flying.

If the spirit of the times was favourable to Mamallapuram art, physical conditions also were congenial. Mamallapuram's location in relation to Kanchipuram and other centres of Pallava piety is significant. The tradition concerning a canal[6] that linked the capital with the port is unreliable. That is certainly not the way to explain Huen-tsang's statement. But that by the time the Mamallapuram monuments arose, early in the eighth century, there was a close connection between Kanchipuram and Mamallapuram may be judged from the location of certain other Pallava monuments.

The modern road that connects the two towns runs through Pullalur, the site of three battles[7] in Pallava and modern times, Vallam, where Mahendra I caused three temples to be excavated in rock, and Thirukkazhukunram, a place of exceptional importance for the study of the beginnings of structural stone temples in the Tamil region. On the outskirts of Mamallapuram there is Puncheri, which ought to be better known than it is, for some inscriptions there preserve the names of seven artists who might have made Mamallapuram. It is quite likely that this modern road follows the alignment of the ancient one, if not fully, at least over many stretches.

However this may be, it is significant that the Pallavas should have created a number of their monuments by this route. The rock temples at Vallam and Tirukkazhukunram belong to the reigns of Mahendra I and Narasimha I, but

another temple, the "Mulasthana"[8], had existed at Tirukkazhukunram since the days of Skandasishya. Early Pallava genealogy is still unsettled, but Skandasishya, who, according to the Velurpalayam inscription,[9] captured the Kanchi "ghatika" from King Satyasena, probably ruled about the middle of the third century A. D. Thus, only ten miles from Mamallapuram there was a temple which was half a millennium old when its own monuments arose. The Vedagirisvara temple at the top of the hills is another Pallava monument, a structural temple of Rajasimha's[10].

The influence of environment on Indian art is little studied. But we may be certain that the Mamallapuram artists themselves felt it keenly. The hillocks on the road from Kanchipuram to Mamallapuram posed a challenge to their chisel, and right nobly was it met. It is impossible to believe that these men of sensibility would not have been stirred to emulation as they looked eastwards from the temple on the Tirukkazhukunram hill their fathers had created at the orders of the great conqueror of Vatapi. They would have seen the white foam breaking on the shore, and they would have descried two more hillocks and a number of boulders nearby. Here was another challenge[11].

As one approaches Mamallapuram from the west, one senses the nearness of history. At Puncheri the makers of the Mamallapuam monuments quite succumbed to this feeling. In later times many Indian artists gratified the human desire to hand down their names to posterity by inscribing them on or near their handiwork. This gratification the artists of Mamallapuram did not enjoy. The name and the lineaments of their royal patron appear at Mamallapuram. But, unless Puncheri was something like a suburb of the port city, rather like Saluvankuppam to the north, these artists were denied this privilege.

Seven names appear in Tamil Pallava Grantha characters on the rocks at Puncheri. They are "Kevadhaperunthacchan", "Gunamallan", "Payyamizhippan", "Sathamukyan", "Kaliyani", "Namaha Tiruvorriyur Adhajan" and "Kollan Seman". The first name is indisputably that of an artist. Perhaps he was a master artist. The expression, "thacchan", indicative of a carpenter, could not have been so inappropriate for a maker of rock or structural stone temples at that time as it would be now "Gunamallan" has the authentic Pallava ring and because it means a wrestler with feelings might well indicate an artist. There would be no point in mentioning the other names along with these two did they not indicate other artists These seven, together with Lalitalaya, who repaired the Vishnu image in the Shore Temple, are the only names of the makers of Mamallapuram that have survived.

South of Mamallapuram on the coast there is another region rich in Pallava associations. At Vayalur Rajasimha constructed a temple. Vasavasamudram[12] was either itself, or contiguous to, a port from which Pallava culture and trade flowed to south-east Asia. Not far off is where the Palar joins the Bay of Bengal.

Mamallapuram, then, was subject to myriad influences congenial to the creation of great art. Sometimes art flourishes despite disadvantages, topographical and other, of siting. Mamallapuram, on the other hand, enjoyed many advantages and made the most of them.

II

THE AUTHOR

There are three structural temples, ten "rathas", two bas reliefs and about ten excavated temples in various degrees of completion in Mamallapuram. The sheer quantity may suggest that a number of kings should have created the monuments, and Mamallapuram has been much partitioned among the Pallavas by scholars.[13]

The earliest Pallava to whom scholars allot a share in the making of the monuments is Narasimha I and the last Narasimha II· A century of time and only a century, divides the Vatapikonda from Atyantakama. But in this period, too brief a one in which ideas or motifs could change fundamentally, a number of evolutionary phases has been postulated, monuments being differentiated in their origin from reign to reign with hardly a quarter of a century between them. The Mamallapuram problem is complicated by the fact that all the monuments are unfinished. To undertake to discover progressive evolution in the art of incomplete monuments is misleading.

It is more reasonable, it stands to common sense, to postulate a single reign in which arose all the monuments without exception. Though the number of these monuments is large, none of them is a big one The biggest, the Dharmaraja ratha, is in size little biggest, the Dharmara a ratha, is in size little bigger than a shrine to be found by the hundred in the temples of later days. Collectively, the labour expended on all the monuments will not equal that which created the Brihadeesvara temples in Tanjore and Gangaikondacholapuram, each of which was planned and built in a single reign.

Moreover, the century, as I have already said was permeated by a sense of religious achievement. Men were stirred to the core of their being by the vision Appar and Sambandar had evoked. Life was held cheap in relation to

the hereafter. Devotees offering their heads appear on some of the Mamallapuram sculptures.[14] Faith could move mountains. Why should it not, under the inspiring direction and zeal of a royal saint, create a large number of monuments?

There was only one Pallava reign when this was possible. Narasimha II came to the throne about 690. His fatherhad to repel Chalukyan invasions and he had retaliated by capturing or raiding Vatapi. Suddenly, and indeed as if by magic, war's alarms cease. Everything, or almost everything, becomes peaceful. Wars and diplomacy were foreign to the spirit of Rajasimha's rule, though he did not run away from them. He was principally a religious aesthete.

Not indeed in the fashion of his ancestor, Mahendra I. That had been eclecticism. Mahendra had been something of a persecutor. He had harassed Appar and later bestroyed a famous Jain monastery at Pataliputra[15]. But there was no contentiousness in Narasimha II's creed.

It was a gentle and serene faith. Rajasimha was a great devotee of Lord Siva, he was a guardian of righteous conduct. He was much devoted to the arts. One of his honorifics in the Kailasanatha temple calls him the "ocean of fine arts". His subjects' welfare he considered his own.

He was a pronounced aesthete. The obverse of the coin is vainglory. He permitted his flatterers to inscribe about three hundred and fifty honorifics in his principal temple However, these are not indiscriminate. If they do err, it is only in slight exaggeration. Besides, most ancient Indian kings lived in an ethos of adulation. Many of them did not find it inappropriate that a led poet should describe them as the Lord of the three worlds when all that they controlled was a few villages.

Narasimha II's aesthetic sensibilities were expressed in their pure form in the innumerable monuments he erected, not one of which is ugly to the slightest extent. Pallava art is a

synonym for grace. There is not an element of discord in any Mamallapuram cemposition. The ultimate source of all this serenity was the religious aesthete who sat on the throne in Kanchi.

Rajasimha loved variety and innovation. Scholastically, the rathas of Mamallapuram are important as records of the buildings of an anterior age which, built as they had been of wood, brick, mortar or metal, have disappeared without exception In the whole range of Indian art there is no other king who felt the impulse to re-create the models of a fallible style. This fact needs to be stressed again and again. Here was no ordinary builder of temples. He was keenly interested in temple art, past and present. He had the scholar's reverence for old monuments to the extent of wanting to preserve their style for after-ages. If he had not made the rathas, an essential link bhtween the brick and timber styles before him and the new mode would have been lost.

If, thus, Rajasimha greeted the unseen with a cheer, he also loved to experiment with the seen. Every aspect of his monuments exhibits a love of variety. For example, even his inscriptions in the Kailasanatha temple are in four different scripts. The foundation epigraph in the Atiranachanda mandapa is repeated on another wall. He introduced an innovation in temple ritual by setting up prismatic lingas.

The honorific most appropriate to such a king would indicate that his artistic desires were unlimited. It is precisely this honorific that appears in inscriptions on all his monuments which carry his epigraphs. It is "Atyantakama".

This "biruda" is to be found on all the monuments with concordant epigraphs, the Atiranachanda mandapa, the Ganesa ratha, the Ramanuja mandapa and the Dharmaraja mandapa. It also appears as part of a label on the Dharmaraja ratha. Of the honorifics engraved on the Dharmaraja ratha sixteen also

appear on the *Kailasanatha* temple in Kanchipuram (though 'Atyantakama' is not one of them). This distinctive and most frequent of his "birudas" is also to be found in the Shore Temple and in the Vayalur and Tirupporur inscriptions. (Two *others*, "Ranajaya" and "Sribhara", also appear on all his monuments, the former except in the Shore Temple and the latter except in Tirupporur, a variant, "Srinidhi" being found in Vayalur).

Unusually in Indian epigraphy, there are repetitions on some of the Mamallapuram monuments of some passages of the inscriptions to be found on some other monuments. This fact must give the scholar to pause. It is impossible to believe that this is fortuitous. Surely there is an indication here of the common authorship of the monuments

The starting point *of* this discussion is the Grantha inscription[16] on the southern wall of the *Atiranachanda* mandapa. It runs *as follows;*

"Just as in a large lake filled with water which is fit for bathing and which is covered with various lotus flowers handsome Sankara abides on the large head—sprinkled with the water of coronation and covered with bright jewels - of the illustrious Atyantakama, who deprives his enemies of their pride, who is a receptacle of wealth, who possesses the charm of Cupid, and who assiduously worships Hara.

"For the welfare of the earth he who stands at the head of the Lords of the earth caused to be made this house of Sambhu, which resembles Kailasa and Mandara.

"May Sribhara be victorious for a long time, who bears Bhava in his mind which is filled with devotion, and bears *the earth on his arm like a coquettish embellishment*

"Atiranachanda, the Lord of the rulers of the earth, made this (temple called) Atiranachandesvara. May Pasupati, attended by the mountain *daughter* and the troop of Guhas, always take delight (in residing) here.

"May the eight-formed lord of beings for a long time take up his abode in this temple (called) Atiranachandesvara, which was caused to be built by him who, together with the name of Atirananchanda, bears deep devotion to Isana, abundant prosperity, the heavy burden of the earth and unequalled liberality, and who is famed by the name of Ranajaya.

"Anugrasila (the gentle minded).

"Who will be able to understand the music of Kalakala if it were not Vidhatri, Bharata, Hari, Narada and Skanda?

"Samaradhanamjaya (the conqueror of wealth in battle)".

Since four of the honorifics in this inscription, "Atiranachanda", "Anugrasila", "Kalakala" and "Samaradhanamjaya", appear[17] in inscriptions on Rajasimha's other monuments, and a fifth, "Samgramadhira", is echoed in that corpus, and since the tribute paid to Rajasimha's skill in music is repeated[18] in the Kailasanatha epigraphs, it has been rightly deduced that the Atiranachanda mandapa was created by Narasimha II.

Since he was an unusual monarch, nothing would content him but that this inscription should be repeated. So it is on the north wall of the monument to the extent of the first six verses, but this time in the Nagari script. The repetition is scarcely called for, but this king loved such things. This, so early in the study of the epigraphical concordance, suggests that similar feats may be expected as one proceeds.

Sure enough, they appear. The epigraph on the southern wall is partly repeated on two of the Mamallapuram monuments. The first two verses appear as the eighth and mandapa. The fifth verse of both the epigraphs says explicitly, "King Atyantakama. who has subdued the territories of his foes, is famed (by the name of) Ranajaya. He caused to be made this house of Sambhu". On the analogy of the Saluvankuppam identification and because of the repetition of the verses the Ganesa ratha should be ascribed to Narasimha II.

So should the Dharmaraja mandapa, where the entire Ganesa ratha epigraph, including the two verses from Saluvankuppam and the affirmation of Atyantakama's authorship, is repeated.

Besides, the fourth verse in the Saluvankuppam inscription, expressing Sribhara's devotion to Lord Siva, appears in the same place on the ratha and the mandapa. This cannot be accidental.

Another concordance links the Ganesa ratha and the Dharmaraja mandapa with the Adivaraha rock temple and the Ramanuja mandapa. The last verse in the first pair of monuments is repeated by itself in the second.

The insistent or ubiquitous honorific of Ra'asimha's, "Atyantakama", appears on the Dharmaraja ratha too. It occurs twice, by itself in the southern part of the first story, and as "Sri Atyantakama Pallavesvargrahm" in the east part of the third story. If it is conceded, as it should be, that this particular honorific was borne exclusively by Rajasimha, it will be clear that he created the Dharmaraja ratha. The making of the unusual monuments that the rathas are is what one should expect of the unusual aesthete that this Pallava king was. There is further epigraphical evidence.

If the same monarch had not created both the Kailasanatha temple in Kanchipuram and the Dharmaraja ratha, it is unlikely that a large number of the honorifics appearing on the second monument would be repeated on the first.

The Dharmaraja ratha has been rather freely partitioned among two Pallavas. It is said that, as "Atyantakama" appears on it, it, must have been completed by Paramesvara I because he is the same as the maker of the Ganesa ratha. Since "Narasimha" also appears on the Dharmaraja ratha, it is asserted that Narasimha I Mamalla must have begun work on it. A honorific, "Mahamalla", is to be found on the eastern face of the third story.

But while "Atyantakama" was the cognomen obviously most beloved of Rajasimha, and that for a reason one easily understands, "Narasimha" and "Mahamalla" are also among his "birudas". "Narasimha" was his personal name. "Mahamalla" appears in his Vayalur inscription in circumstances which suggest that he attached particular significance to it[18]. A verse in that epigraph says that the king was well known to his subjects as "Mahamalla". Most of the innumerable honorifics of Rajasimha might have been conventional ones, but a few are significant. "Narasimha" is self explanatory, "Mahamalla" was a popular "biruda" among his subjects, and "Atyantakama" reveals his personality.

In their very nature, as copies of existing architectural styles, all the five Pandava rathas must have been created by one king Since Rajasimha made the Dharmaraja, he also created the other four in this group. The Ganesa ratha is indisputably his on the strength of his own statement. No other king is likely to have made the four other rathas, particularly the Trimurthi,[20] which is really a ratha with a difference and so very much in Rajasimha's line, as it were. It is the general view that the maker of the rathas also created the remaining monuments in Mamallapuram.

The evolutionary scheme of style at this site has conjured up different schools named after different Pallava kings, but exceptions are recognised. A particular style may persist after the death of the king after whom it is named, and this for a good reason. The makers of the monuments were not likely to change over to a new style merely because their earlier patron ninth in inscriptions in the Ganesa ratha and the Dharmaraja had passed away. But it took only about a century to make the Mamallapuram monuments, all of them, and it is difficult to postulate fundamental differences in style in such a short period.

Mamallapuram studies are an evolving discipline, and some old views become obsolete or have to be modified. One theory, now disproved, relates to the beginnings of Mamallapuram. Some old scholars thought that it was Narasimha I who created it[21]. But studies in the Roman geographers who wrote on voyages to India in the first centuries of the Christian era, the religious literature of the Alvars and some of the Sangam poems have now shown that, in fact, Mamallapuram had been an important port and a centre of pilgrimage long before Narasimha I. Rajasimha's sole authorship of all the monuments is a notion that might look strange to the popular understanding that associates the site with his great-grandfather. But the facts, if correctly interpreted, prove it.

Narasimha I's capture of Vatapi in 642 A. D, signally avenging the defeats of his father at the hands of Pulakesin II-, was his greatest feat of arms. It was long cherished by his dynasty which lost no opportunity of referring to it in its inscriptions. This is hardly surprising, for the Pallavas and the Chalukyas were locked in a conflict that, with intermissions, lasted some two centuries. Sweet must have been every victory gained in these wars, and particularly sweet the capture of the hated enemy's capital and the occupation of his territories for some twelve years. A measure of this triumph viewed from the other side is the long sustained campaign that Vikramaditya I, Pulakesin II's son and successor, waged in the Pallava territories to remove that blot on the family name before defeat at Peruvalanallur drove him back. With what gusto do his Honnur plates[22] record that "after having made his own the fortune of his father which had been obscured by a trio of kings" he was in a great military camp at Malliyur, near Kanchi. The Chalukya established another camp at Uragapura, in Colikavishaya. But Peruvalanallur put a stop to all this, and now Pallava epigraphy takes up the tale of jubilation. The celebrated Kuram plates[23] of the victor, Paramesvara, I,

positively gloat in the Peruvalanallur triumph. "Unaided, he made Vikramaditya, whose army consisted of several lakshas, take to flight, covered only by a rag".

Certainly it is beyond humanity to expect the Pallavas to pass over in silence such a signal triumph as the capture of Vatapi. In fact, the honorific, "captor of Vatapi" became associated with Narasimha I, even more than "Mamalla", in the same way that "*Atyantakama*" was to be with Narasimha II. Only two inscriptions that Narasimha I himself issued have survived; the famous one at Badami[24] and another at Tirukkazhukunram[25], where he is called "*Vatapikonda*". But the epigraphs of his successors are full to overflowing with references to this great victory. Always Narasimha I is the hero of Vatapi, never a builder of temples or a king of unlimited fancy.

Thus, the Kuram plates of his grandson produce a litany of praise with the success at Vatapi as the climax, "Narasimhavarman who arose from the kings of this (Pallava) race, just like the moon and sun from the eastern mountain; who has the crest jewel on the head of those princes who had never bowed their heads (before); who appeared to be the blessed Narasimha himself who had come down (to the earth) in the shape of a prince; who proved a lion to the elephant herd of hostile kings; who repeatedly defeated the Cholas, Keralas, Kalabhras and Pandyas; who, like Sahasrabahu, enjoyed the action of a thousand arms in hundreds of fights; who wrote the (three) syllables of (the word) vijaya, as on a plate, on Pulakesi's back, which was caused to be visible in the battles of Pariyala, Manimangala, Suramara etc; and who destroyed (the city of) Vatapi just like the pitcher born (Agastya) (the demon) Vatapi".

But this triumph, the greatest in the military annals of the dynasty, is not referred to in any of the Mamallapuram inscriptions even in circumstances in which the reference would have been perfectly in order. Nothing could have been more appro-

priate than "Vatapikonda" on the Dharmaraja ratha had this monument been created by that hammer of the Chalukyas. But such an inscription does not appear there.

Rajasimha's father, Paramesvara I, repeated the achievement of Narasimha I[26]. Rajasimha refers to this exploit of his father, so much the more to be cherished because it had been preceded by defeat and exile on more than one occasion. Thus, in an epigrph[27] of his in the Kailasanatha temple he says of Parmesvara I that he was "the supreme lord Ugradanda, who was born in the race of these (the Pallavas), the destroyer of the city of Ranarasika". Again, an inscription[28] on the Mahendravarmesvara shrine, built by Rajasimha's son, Mahendra, in the Kailasanatha temple says that Rajasimha "sprang from that Lokaditya, whose valour dried up the army of Ranarasika, just as the heat of the sun does the mud".

But this achievement too is not referred to in any of the Mamallapuram inscriptions. It is hardly to be expected that Paramesvara I or before him Narasimha I, would fail to mention it, when their successors did so with a great glow of pride had either of them created any of Mamallapuram monuments.

The problem of authorship and date bedevilled Mamallapuram studies from their first days in modern times. James Fergusson, who often changed his mind before arriving at the second half of the seventh century[29], was handicapped by the imperfect knowledge available in his time of the relevant inscriptions and literature and of the cognate monuments[30], those other excavations and structural temples of the Pallavas which need to be studied to understand Mamallapuram in its artistic perspective. He also laboured under a misconception. In calling Mamallapuram a "petrified Buddhist village", he attached too much importance to the Buddhist elements of the Indian heritage and too little to the fact that Hindus, Buddhists

and Jains all followed common principles and practices throughout the artistic history of India. He was unaware of the brick and timber temples that, as the Sangam poems and the later hymns testify, filled the Tamil region.

The rathas and the bas reliefs which are unique to Mamallapuram have to be studied in the isolation of their existence. There were not many stone structural temples built before those at the site.[31] The earliest ones to survive belong only to the previous reign, that of Paramesvara I. (Little has survived of the Tiruvadigai temple said to have been built by Mahendra I). But there are some twenty Pallava rock temples outside Mamallapuram[32]. The earlier theories on the supposed evolution of Mamallapuram rock art are based mainly on a study of these temples.

According to these theories, Mamallapuram art graduated from the simple to the complex, from the primitive to the ornate. But Mamallapuram contains highly evolved excavated temples like the Adivaraha, Mahishamardhani, and Varaha on the one hand, and simple ones like the Kotikkal on the other. That is, great care and artistic skill have been expended on the first group, and very little on the second. But was this because the makers of the first were more skilful and experienced and were working under a later king, while those of the second were inexpert artists with little experience under an earlier king? To assert this is to sanction the notion that as soon as each successive king came to the throne his artists automatically became more skilled. Obviously this could not have been the case.

The evolution of the pillar has been taken to be the criterion in tracing the development of Mamallapuram art and assigning the contributions of individual reigns. The pillar is not the most prominent or important feature of a temple. That distinction naturally belongs to the shrine and, where they

exist, to the entablature or other parts of the facade. But the pillar is what has been selected for study, and there has been evolved the theory that the pillars of the Mahendra I school are heavy, little demarcated and plain, that under Narasimha I and Paramesvara I the sedent lion was introduced at the base while the capital became an elaborate one, and that under Narasimha II, the rampant lion replaced the earlier beast and that the whole pillar became a slender and ornate thing of beauty. Such a view implies that the Pallava artists were unskilful and immature between circa 610 and 630 A. D., that they became better artists between circa 630 and 690, and that they become excellent artists between circa 690 and circa 730.

But, in fact, though the Atiranachanda temple is demonstably Rajasimha's, its pillars are simple and plain, like those ascribed to the primitive period of Mahendra I. Of the two rows of pillars in the Koneri mandapa the outer one is of the Narasimha I type with a sedent lion at the base, while the inner is slender and fluted, but without any motif at the base. In the Adivaraha temple the outer pillars are plain and the inner ones advanced in style with sedent lions at the base.

Outside Mamallapuram, the famous inscription of Rajasimha's at Vayalur is engraved on a Mahendra-type pillar, Narasimha I-style pillars adorn the small shrines in the prakara of the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram and also the Nandi mandapa in front, both built by Rajasimha.

There are variations in some other details too. It is on the lateral, not on the back walls that shrines have been excavated at Tiruchi, Dalavanur and Kuranganilmuttam. There are small pillared porches in front of the shrine at Dalavanur and in the Mahishamardhani temple at Mamallapuram. On either side of most of the shrines *dvarapalas* have been carved, but in some cases they also appear on either side of the facade. Only some of the shrines have steps leading up

to them, with a kind of moonstones on the floor.

Nor is there any uniformity in the excavation of the equivalents in rock of the structural *ardha* and *mukha* mandapas in front of the shrine. Kilmavilangai consists of just the shrine. The second and third temples at Vallam have negligible *ardha* mandapas. A few of the other excavations have both the mandapas, but most only the *ardha*, like the Atiranachanda, Varaha and Ramanuja.

Much more significant is the presence of superb sculptures in excavations which are supposed to be early and which, therefore, ought to be crude and ungainly. An early excavation should have no or few sculptures. If it has any, they should be clumsy and heavy like the Mahendra-type pillars. An inexperienced artist will have his hands full with the excavation and cannot be expected to produce masterpieces of sculpture. In fact, however, the Gangadhara panel in the upper rock temple at Tiruchi, made by Mahendra I, is one of the achievements of the Indian plastic genius.

The older scholars concentrated their attention on the pillars in the rock temples. Later studies in some of the other architectural features show, in the opinion of their authors, a gradual evolution of style, spread over many periods. Thus, it is said, there are certain architectural and iconographical features[33] in Rajasimha's rock temples which are absent in the structural temples at Mamallapuram. An important stylistic feature of Rajasimha's structural stone temples is that the *hara*, or garland, of miniature shrines is absent on the first and the last storeys. Images of Ganesa and the Saptamatrikas, which do not appear in the rock temples, are to be found in Rajasimha's structural temples. It is asserted that they represent Chalukyan influence[34] in Rajasimha's time. The fact that they are not to be found in the Mamallapuram rock temples, it is argued, shows that these excavations were anterior to Rajasimha.

Apart from the possibly pettifogging fact that there were insignificant Chalukyan relations in Rajasimha's time, his only external concerns being some obscure ones with the Tibeteans and the Arabs, these arguments ignore the fact that the *agamas* gave considerable latitude to the artist in Rajasimha's time and a little later. These manuals had not yet attained their compulsive forms. Little wonder, then, that there are some variations in practice. Further, structural temples are an artistic different on excavated "caves" and their idiom is bound to be a little different. The makers of Mamallapuram must not be expected to follow the same rules while building a temple and while excavating another, it is interesting that one of Rajasimha's honorofics should be *Agama pramana* or one who followed the Agama.

Artistic evolution over a period of time at Mamallapuram has been asserted on another ground, on the basis of a study [35] of variations in the dress and ornaments of figures in the sculpted panels and of details of sculpture which are not connected with human dress and ornaments. Such a study, it appears, shows that some of the Mamallapuram monuments, for example the Mahishamardhani temple, contain sculptures and images that belong to different times, not to be comprehended in a single reign.

There are two objections to this theory. First, the *agamas* do not sanction it. They are meticulous enough in their directives to the artists, but they do not prohibit variations in minute particulars. Latitude is given to the individual artists, and they made full use of the liberty. Artists have always been impatient of control and directive. Those of Hindu India have perhaps been less so than their compeers in other countries. Even so, they are not slavish conformists.

Secondly, any identity of insignificant sculptural and iconographical features in monuments erected at different places, Kanchipuram, for example, and Mamallapuram, demands

a superhuman degree of adherence to directives or practices. An artist must surely be free to add a leg ornament to the figure he is sculpting or not to add to it. If he were working at Mamallapuram, he cannot be expected to know whether some other artist active at, say, Kanchipuram had added that ornament to another sculpture. Still less should he be expected to add or not add simple features because these had been added or not added on some other monument. He was not creating exact copies. A school of art is apt to produce similarities in vital phyisognomical features like the face. Pallava faces are oval or heart shaped. But should all Pallava sculptures be expected to wear the same kind or size of dress or ornament, whether they are of Gods, kings or commoners?.

To recapitulate and to add to the premise of Rajasimha's sole authorship of all the Mamallapuram monuments, his works exhibit a wide variety of style in keeping with the honorific most often applied to him *Atyantakama*. The Dharmaraja ratha should not be assigned to Narasimha I because the honorifics it bears are not those given to him in his own or in later epigraphs, whereas no less than sixteen of these correspond to Rajasimha's as found in his Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram.

This fact also rules out any possible share for Paramesvara I. In any case, the partitioning of a comparatively small monument storey by storey on far from secure evidence is unjustified.

Nor can the Ganesa ratha and the Dharmaraja mandapa be attributed to Paramesvara I. They contain a part of the epigraphs in the Atiranachanda temple, which is indisputably Rajasimha's. The second verse in the inscription in the Ganesa ratha and the Dharmaraja mandapa mentions Paramesvara. But it is Lord Siva who is meant, not the mortal king[36]. That distinctive honorific, *Atyantakama*, however, appears in this epigraph and cannot possibly be held to signify any

other monarch. The 'Malla' found in the Trimurthi temple[37] was a cognomen borne by Rajasimha too.

These temples, then, were all made by Rajasimha In the light of the opinion that he who created these temples made all the others, Mamallapuram becomes all Rajasimha, an artistic and religious aesthete, fond of variety, ambitious in his undertakings, who enjoyed a long reign of near forty years, for the most part undisturbed by war. If there was any epoch in the history of the Pallavas from Simhavishnu to Aparajjita when religious art could grow unhampered, it was the reign of Rajasimha.

'If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous', wrote Gibbon, 'he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus'. Rajasimha's reign was another such period in southern India. It was too good to last. Within three or four years of the royal saint's death calamity came to the Pallava kingdom.

If it was not a usurpation, Nandivarman Pallavamalla's accession to the Kanchi throne following an interregnum after Parameswara II's brief reign had ended in defeat and death was a dynastic revolution. Possibly because he did not command the support of all the influential sections of his subjects, Pallavamalla had a difficult time of it. He had to flee his kingdom, his enemies initially the Badami Chalukyas and the Gangas but latter the Rashtrakutas often proving too much for him His reign was no time for art. A number of epigraphs belong to his times, but just two of them are found at Mamallapuram. As it happens they are the last Pallava epigraphs at a site which will always be associated with the dynasty. Engraved in the Adivaraha temple, one of them indicates the commercial importance of Mamallapuram. Evidently the days of art were over at the port city.

Had the monuments been created from reign to reign, it is hard to explain why when one of them was left incomplete the artists who returned to Mamallapuram after an interval did not complete it. The artists of Paramesvara I would surely have made haste to complete, for example, the Panchapandava, work on which is said to have begun in the reign of his grandfather.

But if it is accepted that Rajasimha created all the monuments and that the grave anarchy soon after his death made continuance of artistic labours at Mamallapuram imposible, the state of the site becomes perfectly explicable. There was swift recovery after every one of the earlier cataclysms. Narasimha I and Paramesvara I were even able to turn the tables on their enemies. But Pallavamalla's reign was a long one of difficulties. Significantly, it is not until the very last year of his rule that old times return to the site and that too only epigraphically. The only considerable Pallava temple after Rajasimha, the Vaikunta Perumal, was built towards the end of the reign. In fact, Pallava power became so weakened that it could hereafter erect only some small temples like the Muktesvara and the Matangesvara and no longer any in the elaborate style of the Kailasanatha or the Vaikunta Perumal except the Sundaravarada Perumal at Uttaramerur.

III

THE EXAMPLES

The art of Mamallapuram is both a beginning and an end. Into its making went the artistic ethos of the previous centuries, and, in its turn, it made not a little of that of the later ages.

Hindu art is traditional and hieratic. Some critics believe that the *agama* and *silpa* sastras stifled innovation and progress. Certainly their prescriptions have been followed for an astonishing duration of time. The only variations are those which they themselves sanction. Regional influences have made for a little variety.

The history of the structural stone temple in the Tamil region provides an example of the latitude which became increasingly rare and finally disappeared. The first temple of which there is epigraphical record and which has survived to some extent is that at Kuram built by Paramesvara I. Those which are reasonably entire are those of his son. *Atyantakama* made the most of the latitude still available then. He built a temple on the very margin of the sea, adding two shrines on either side of an existing third which had already become famous. He erected two more temples on hills, at Mamallapuram and at Panamalai The Kailasanatha at Kanchi is in an unusual style, being surrounded by a number of small shrines.

There was a large body of ancient precept and practice, apart from the nascent *agamas* behind Rajasimha's artists as they set to work at Mamallapuram. Speaking in general terms, the indigenous Tamil tradition supplied the body of their art, the Buddhist heritage of the south Andhra region a few motifs and mannerisms in sculpture, and the Chalukya school, more or less contemporary, immediate models and the

challenge of emulation.

If the rude caverns fashioned for Jain ascetics, with stone beds and carrying Damili epigraphs, are excluded from consideration, as they should be, for they are no works of art, the earliest Hindu religious monument that has survived in the Tamil region seems to the Pillayarpatti rock temple[38]. It belongs to about the fifth century A.D. But the Tamils, with their culture and Hindu fervour, could not have had to wait until the fifth century for temples to pray in.

Sangam literature[39] bears witness to the fact that a large number of temples existed in that age and that there were manuals of architecture which the artists followed apart from, or in addition to, the agamas (which, however, were then in a rudimentary stage). But none of these temples has survived, and only a few references in the Sangam poems speak to the existence of the manuals, of which there is no other indication.

None of these brick and timber temples could be expected to survive. An acute art student like Mahendra I realised this. Hence Mandagappattu. But it was not through rock excavations alone that he attempted to defeat the tooth of time. He introduced stone pillars in brick and timber structures, possibly as a first step towards completely structural stone temples Not even one stone pillar which might have been used before his time has survived, whereas many belonging to those of his son and great-grandson have. Therefore, to Mahendra I may properly be awarded the credit for feeling the way towards the medium which was destined to supersede the new element which, at the same time, he himself was introducing at Mandagappattu. Stone pillars had been used in the Sangam age temples, but in Mahendra's time, several centuries later, they were virtually an innovation, a herald of the structural stone age.

The faded but sonorous inscription at Mandagappattu is a cry of triumph that has echoed down the ages. But what exactly is the king exulting about? Is he rejoicing in the fact that he had made a temple for the Gods in imperishable rock ? Even if he had not known of Pillayarpatti, must he not have been aware of the rock creations of his Vishnukundin grandfather[40] in and near Vijayawada ?

The view that Mahendra prides himself on having utilised for his pious art granite rock which is very hard and not amenable to carving, unlike the Badami Chalukyas who achieved their effects in tractable stone, implies that the Pallava was something of a geologist[41]. There is no ground for supposing that he ever saw a Badami Chalukyan monument. The first shot[42] in the hundred years war between the Pallavas and the Chalukyas was fired in his reign. He did not have to look to the north-west for models.

It may simply be that Mahendra exults in having for the first time in the Tamil region created an *ayatana* for the Trinity. This would be in keeping with the temperament of 'Vichitrachitta', a trait which his descendant, the maker of Mamallapuram, was to exhibit in even larger measure

In any case, Mandagappattu cannot be so important as it was thought to be. No part of Mahendra's? has survived in the Gunadaraviccuram at Tiruvadigai, but even if it was not Mahendra's first essay in religious art (as it could be because he built it in the first flush of his Hindu enthusiasm), it was close enough to be one. Mandagappattu's primacy must be in doubt.

Mahendra's Tamil art heritage was a considerable one. Architecture had been an exact science in the Sangam age. It was guided by manuals, now lost. Two commentators on "Silappadhikaram" cite a number of verses from these. "Nedunalvadai" specifically says, "The royal palace was built by archi-

tects well versed in their science". What was known as the Maya school seems to have been the most popular.

Architecture was studied under four categories, the soil of the site to be built upon, the buildings, the furniture and the vehicles. Elaborate tests were made to determine the suitability of the soil in respect of its strength, the water table and the presence of gaseous matters. Three kinds of soil were recognised, hard, soft and medium.

Suitability trials consisted in digging a pit one foot deep. The excavated soil was then put back into the pit. If the new level of the pit overtopped the old one, the site was considered suitable. If it was the same, the ground was of medium safety. If it was lower, the site was unsuitable.

Sites which were of clay or of saline soil or which contained bodily remains were rejected. The poems contain detailed descriptions of units of measurement and instructions on how to manufacture these units.

A large number of temples were built. According to Thirumangai Alvar, Sengannan, an early Chola king, constructed no less than seventy. A Chera erected a temple to Kannagi, employing celebrated architects. "Silappadhikaram" refers to temples to Krishna and Balarama as "kovil", "kottam" and "nagaram". The "kottam" was a rectangular shrine with a wagon roof, perhaps like the Bhima and Ganesa rathas. The "nagaram" was a square shrine with a four-sided domical roof. Iconography was in an advanced stage. "Pattupattu" refers to the Anantasayi form of Lord Vishnu. There are innumerable references to Trivikrama in "Manimekhalai," in Poygai Alvar and in "Parippadal". This last poem also refers to Narasimha, Krishna and Varaha. Many of these forms are illustrated in Mamallapuram as, indeed, they are in the rock art of the Pandyas, the Muttaraiyars and the Adigamans.

Some of the Sangam-age temples were of many storeys. The basement and the pillars were usually of stone, while the walls were of burnt brick or clay The superstructure was built with wooden rafts and beams, thatched leaves or flat tiles.

Some of the royal palaces are described at length. According to "Nedunalvadai," the gateway of a Pandya queen's palace was so broad that caparisoned elephants could pass through it. Wooden doors, which were lubricated with oil, had handles made in the form of the lotus. Between the doorway and the main building there was a big open courtyard. There were small carvings on the basement of this building, and the cornice had gargoyle shaped spouts to take off rain water.

The inner chamber in this palace was furnished luxuriously. A beautifully carved lampstand, made by the Yavanas, had five cavities in which clarified butter burned to light the wicks The queen's bed, which was of ivory, contained many carvings, one of them of a hunter killing a lion On the supports of the bed there were leaf patterns, embedded with gems. There were paintings above the canopy. The walls of the palace, which had a large number of rooms, were plastered so brightly that they shone like silver, and they carried beautiful painted designs Sculpture was added wherever it was possible to do so.

The houses of the rich subjects were of several storeys, a few of as many as seven. A mansion in Puhar had tall storeys, a high outer gate with curved verandahs, and a low wall of enclosure A poet compares a group of tall mansions to the peaks of a mountain. The walls were of brick and mortar, while the pillars and doors were of hard wood, sometimes carved or covered with metal. This kind of pillars supported a large hall at Uraiyur. Some windows were built in the shape of eyes of deer. The facades of the houses were in the likeness of the lion, the tiger or other animals. The so called Tiger's Cave at Saluvankuppam recalls this fact.

Little wonder, then, that the principal Tamil cities were impressive. Puhar, according to a Buddhist work written in the fifth century, was 'inhabited by men and women of noble descent. The city is complete in all aspects and presents a beautiful appearance . . . . The city is full of lofty and palatial mansions, beautified with entrance towers'. Three elephants abreast could enter through the city's broad gateway There was a storeyed watch tower on the top of the gateway. Puhar's ramparts which, in a conventional phrase, 'reached the sky', had an ornamental lintel on which a tall tower rested.

There was sculpture on practically every public building and perhaps also on the houses of the rich. The most popular material was stucco. Artists in stucco, called 'mannittalars', were held in great regard. Another favoured art was ivory carving.

From this account of the art of the Sangam age and more generally before the Mamallapuram rathas were created it is clear that some of its features have been incorporated in the later temples of the Tamil region. In the first place, the variety of shrines on plan, rectangles with wagon roofs, squares with four-sided domical roofs, and others was followed and expanded, with the addition of the apsidal plan, for example, or, very rarely, the circular. Secondly, the 'kudu' is connected with the structural facades of deer's eyes and the like, referred to above. Thirdly, the use of sculpture in a temple, not merely as an 'ornament' but to lend balance to the architecture so well established in the Sangam period, continued in later times Lastly the great importance attached to painting is reflected in the fact that almost all the monuments of Hindu India until the middle ages were painted.

Buddhist art, to the extent that it was distinct from Hindu or Jain, contributed its share to the growth of Mamallapuram art. But this must not be exaggerated. When Fergusson called Mamallapuram a petrified Buddhist village, he

must have been impressed by the style of the superstructure of monuments like the Dharmaraja ratha, which, with its receding storeys, was considered a miniature of the vihara. There is an additional influence. These receding storeys contain "haras" of miniature shrines, some of which are replicas of the main shrine on the top of which they stand. Judged by strict artistic canons, this kind of ornaments is not perhaps very satisfying. Though there are three types of these miniature shrines, the 'kutas', the 'salas' and the 'panjaras', it cannot be denied that they tend to induce a certain sense of monotony. If, nevertheless, the great artists of the past accepted them as a feature of the entablature, they had before them the over-powering example of the Amaravati stupa[43].

This was the most magnificent religious building in all of southern India for many centuries since in the second century A.D. the Satavahanas enlarged and renovated the old structure of Asoka's. It must have been the lodestar of the Buddhists of southern India, who were particularly numerous and influential at one time, not least in the Tamil region. Some of the pilgrims whose donative records have been found in Amaravati sculptures[44] were from this part of the country. This stupa is reproduced in small many a time on the sculptures which once covered it Though scarcely necessary, this motif has been adopted on Hindu temples.

Then, the apsidal temple, like the Sahadeva ratha, shares its plan with the Buddhist "chaitya". There are a few examples of this style, mostly in Tondaimandalam, rarely farther south The apsidal form was popular at Nagarjunakonda, the last phase of Amaravati art[45]. No less than nine temples once stood near the citadel at Nagarjunakonda. Five were dedicated to Lord Siva, Lord Kartikeya, and Goddess Devasena. The temple of Ashtabujaswami (which recalls the pre-Pallava temple of the same name at Kanchipuram), built about 278. A.D., had two shrines, one apsidal and the other oblong There were pillared halls in front of both the shrines. There was a bigger

hall at the back. A temple of Goddess Hariti, of about the fifth century, had likewise a large pillared hall.

There was a variety of temple plans. While the apsidal and the oblong were the most popular, the square was in its beginnings. There was an apsidal shrine in the Pushpabhadraswami temple. Another temple had two or more apsidal shrines in a row, all enclosed by an oblong rail. There were rectangular shrines too. There were usually pillared halls in front of the shrines. Around these halls there was a number of subsidiary shrines on oblong, circular, square or octagonal "adishthanas".

The temples' elevation can only be guessed at. The halls, which were supported by carved pillars, must have been covered by flat roofs. The apsidal shrines obviously had "elephant back" superstructures. The square and oblong shrines had flat roofs. To judge from the comparative paucity of sculptures in the excavations, the temple walls were not embellished much.

The shrines were built of brick, and the halls of stone. In one temple, the Sarvadeva, wood was also used. It appears to have been a palace temple. The Pushpabhadraswami and the Nodagisvaraswami temples were "devakulas".

At least a few of these temples were standing when Mamallapuram art was created. There is an inscription of the seventh century[46] on one of them. At Yaleswaram, on the opposite bank of the Krishna, there are ruins of temples of later centuries.

The Buddhist art of south Andhra bequeathed some features to Mamallapuram. The friezes of animals which appear on the mouldings of the "adishthana" and the motif of the lotus out of which the "adishthana" emerges figuratively appear in both the schools. So does the motif of garland

bearers present in Gandhara art, but perfected at Amaravati. "Dvarapalas" are found in an Amaravati sculpture, but they were more prominent in the Sangam-age temples, where they were worshipped.

In summary, these two schools of art, Tamil Sangam and south Andhra, provided the makers of Mamallapuram with a variety of shrine plans, the "haras" of miniature shrines on the storeys of the entablature, the "kudus" on the cornice, a few motifs on the basement, and the use of sculpture and painting[47] not only to set off the architecture but to lend it balance.

Nearer in time than these influences, contemporary, in fact, was the temple art of the Badami region. The first monument in that area is the Vaishnava rock temple at Badami dated 578 AD At Mahakuta "there were temples, including at least the Mahakutesvara, by about the close of the sixth century AD. How far earlier we do not know at present"[48]. Aihole was an even earlier centre, followed by Mahakuta and Badami The religious art of these places, supplemented by Pattadakkal to some extent, was a standing invitation, as it were, to the Pallavas to emulate despite the inveterate hostility of the two dynasties.

This, then, was the art situation at the beginning of Rajasimha's reign in Tondaimandalam, made up of the tradition of the earlier schools, the directives of the emerging "agama" and "silpa" texts and the challenge of the contemporary practice in Karnataka. There were also the earlier Pallava rock temples elsewhere in the kingdom. It remained for the Mamallapuram artists to compose their art.

IV

THE RATHAS

Rock architecture was about a thousand years old[19] in India as a whole and less than a century old in the Tamil region without reckoning Pillayarpatti when in Narasimha II's reign artists were set to excavate temples at Mamallapuram. Every turn of their chisel was guided by the long experience since Barabar and Mandagappattu. But the artists did not produce merely the type of rock excavations of which the country was full, in the Western Ghats, near Sanchi, and near Bhubaneshvar. They did excavate shrines which the older artists would have recognised as akin to their own. But they also produced two amazing variations on a theme which had become rather worn out, sculpture on a grand scale and architectural sculpture.

The ten rathas (the Trimurthi rock temple is best regarded as a ratha because it simulates the oblong buildings which must have occurred along with the square and the apsidal) are none of them huge. The biggest, the Dharmaraja, measures twenty-six feet nine inches by twenty-feet eight inches, its height being a little more than thirty-five feet. The effect these rathas create, embellished as they were by some of the most graceful figure carvings in the history of Indian art, is one of sculptural scintillation.

It cannot be determined whether the Pandava rathas were cut out of a single hillock which sloped down northwards from the south or whether there were five big contiguous boulders which were transformed. Because four other rathas have been fashioned out of rocks lying scattered elsewhere in Mamallapuram and a fifth on the western face of the the hill, it may perhaps be deduced that the makers utilised whatever pieces of rock were suitable. But the question has no relevance to the form or spirit of these monuments.

The Dharmaraja ratha is a square vimana with three storeys, each of them apparently intended to be a separate shrine, to judge from the fact that there is a Somaskanda image on the western side of the top storey and a shrine on the same side of the storey below. The ground storey has not been completed. The sikhara, which is of the Dravidian order, is octagonal. The finial is missing. All makers of shrines rock faced the difficulty that, working from the top to the bottom as they were, they had to begin with the finial which, in structural temples, is added last of all before the consecration ceremony. They must have tried to solve the difficulty by making a separate finial which they would have intended to attach to the sikhara had the temple been consecrated. The Dharmaraja ratha, of course, was not. The finial, a separate piece of sculpture, was either not made or it is lost.

The entablature is a full and rich one. The flexed cornice contains a number of "kudu" arches with human faces peeping out of them. Below the cornice is a famous Amaravati motif, that of a garland, borne by "ganas" here. There is a "hara" of miniature shrines on the edge of each of the "talas". There are three "salas" in the middle portion with "karnakutas" at the corners. On the rim of the second storey there are two miniature shrines in the centre and only one on that of the third, the storeys thus diminishing in size as they approach the sikhara This octagonal member looks rather massive, possibly a little out of proportion in relation to the dainty features below it.

Each of the four sides of the facade consists of two pilasters and two pillars. Forming part of each pilaster, or as an extension of it, is a niche which contains divine and human figures in full length. On the eastern side, however, this scheme is left incomplete. Had the shrine on the ground floor been excavated, it would, no doubt, face west like those on the storeys above.

Of the eight sculptures in the corner blocks one with two hands is of royal mien He must be a Pallava king It is moving to think that here is a portrait of one of the noblest kings of India, the maker of Mamallapuram temples The inscription above it is " Sri Mega Trailorya-vardhana and Vidhi". In the terms of the argument advanced in this book, the king is Rajasimha.

The seven other images are Ardhanarisvara, Harihara, Brahma Skanda as Gurumurthi, Bhairava and two other forms of Lord Siva. The divine figures have no identification epigraphs. Of course, these were not, and are not, required. But royal honorifics are scattered, as it were all over the surface [50] There are nine of them on this storey. The vital " Atyantakama appears on the south along with "Anekopaya", "Srimegha", "Trailokyavardhna" and "Vidhi". On the east there are "Prithvisara", "Sribhara" and "Bhuvanabhajana". The ninth is "Sri Narasimha".

On the northern side of the second storey there are images of Lord Siva as the Divine Dancer, Vinadhara, Gangadhara, Vrishbhantika, Kalarimurthi, and with Chandesa, and of Lord Vishnu as Garudantika.

Of the twenty-six honorifics engraved on this storey a single one appears to be a personal name, "Sri Narasimha", on the northern facade. The others indicate the qualities which Rajasimha wished to believe that he possessed or those which his eulogists fathered on him. They run the gamut of human perfection They are, on the northern side, "Sthirabhakti', "Madanabhirama," "Vidhi", "Bhuvanabhajana', "Srimegha", "Apratihatasasana", "Kamalalita", "Ameyamya, "Sakalakalyana", "Nayanamanohara", "Vama" and ',Atimana". On the south there occur "Lalita", "Nayanamanohara", "Sarvotabhadra"; "Srinidhi", "Niruttara", "Vidhi", and "Vibhranta". Four, "Vama" "Parapara", "Anupama", and "Nayankura", are on the eastern facade, and two, "Satyaparakrama" and "Paravara", on the west.

It is on third storey that the name of the temple occurs, "Sri Atyantakama Pallavesvaragrham". The only other inscription on this storey is "Ranajaya". Is there any significance in the fact that "Ranajaya" should be coupled with the name of the temple in this manner? This particular cognomen appears on all but one of the nine monuments associated with Rajasimha, the exception being Tirupporur. The only other honorific of Rajasimha's to appear on eight of his nine monuments is "Atyantakama".

On this third storey there are sculptures of Dakshinamurthi, Surya, Chandra, the two latter with haloes. In the sanctum a Somaskanda appears, and it is flanked by dvarapalas. There are also many devotees.

Many of these sculptures are of literary and iconographic interest. The one in the second storey of Lord Nataraja, dancing on Apasmara, is among the earliest representations of this concept in the Tamil region. Pallava sculpture, here and elsewhere, of the various forms of Lord Nataraja's dance "amply corroborates" the Thevaram hymns Kaliyamardhana Krishna, also on the second storey, is "easily the earliest representation in sculpture wherein Krishna[5] is performing a boat dance, or vichitra tandava, by catching hold of the tail of Kaliya and using it as an oar". An image of Lord Siva, on the second storey carries a bow in one hand. The other hand is placed on the shoulder of a figure nearby. This figure may be Arjuna or Chandesa. If it is the latter, this is the earliest sculpture to depict him. All this is an indication of the fact that much of Mamallapuram sculpture is based on literary sources. Further striking examples at the site are "Arjuna's Penance", Lord Krishna at Govardhana and the two sculptures in the Mahisha mardhani temple.

The Arjuna ratha differs from the Dharmaraja only in its smaller size and in having two storeys, not three. In many other respects it is a version of the other in the architectural

ordinance. Square on plan, it measures eleven and a half feet by sixteen feet, its height being about twenty feet. The shrine is a small one, four and a half feet by five feet. The Dharmaraja ratha is nearly six times in area of this ratha

The scheme of the cornice, the "kudus", and the "haras", is the same as in the Dharmaraja ratha, except that below the cornice there are a row of "ganas" and a frieze of geese in the upper storey. In front of the small cella is the ardhanmandapa, borne on two pilasters with sedent lions at their base. The two intervening pillars are lost and have now been replaced by plain shafts, the only jarring note in a symphony.

Each of the three walls has been divided into five long vertical panels. All but one of these, on the north, contain superb sculptures. Many of these seem to be human portraits. It is tempting to identify the couple on the south wall with Rajasimha and his queen, the second portrait of the royal saint at this site after the one on the Dharmaraja ratha.[51]

Two "dvarapalas" flank the northern wall. To the right of the western figure there is an empty niche. That is followed by Garudantika Vishnu and then by a couple of figures. The first panel on the eastern wall contains a "dvarapala" or a human or a semi-divine being. Next is a group of two figures, one a bearded sage and the other his disciple. The middle portion is occupied by a two armed figure on an elephant. He may be either Muruga or Indra The next niche is occupied by the sculpture of two lovely damsels. A "dvarapala" completes the gallery on this wall. He is followed by a similar figure as the monument turns to the southern wall. There is Lord Siva with Nandi at the centre. On either side there are couples. The western end of this wall contains a "dvarapala". There are figures of couples on the first storey.

The Arjuna ratha shares a common platform with its northern neighbour, the Draupadi ratha. Alternating lions and

elephants seem to be supporting the temple. The shrine is now empty [52] On its back wall there are still some traces of paintings, meagre relics of a once extensive corpus.

While the Dharmaraja and Arjuna rathas are elegant the Bhima ratha is massive It is the least finished of the Pandava rathas and it has no inscription or sculpture except bas relief models of vimanas carved at either end of the roof. These belong to the composite variety of the Vesara order, with a square plan upto the entablature. The griva and the sikhara are circular

This ratha is important as showing the influence of the wood worker on Pallava art. Just as at Karle there are, or were, wooden beams, though scarcely necessary in a rock excavation, there are many indications of the wood worker's art in this massive monument. There have been reproduced the ends of "square-headed transverse beams needed to support the curved rafter of the roof in a wooden building of this kind". The monument is rent "Even before they (the artists) had nearly completed the excavation of the lower storey, the immense mass of materials left above settled and cracked the edifice in all directions and to such an extent as to necessitate the abandonment of the works "[53] Actually, there is a rent in only one direction, starting a little to the south of the centre and running down. It is, of course, quite likely that this failure was caused by the makers' ignorance of the laws of masses in structures. The Pallava artists appear on the whole to have been cautious and deliberate. For example, they did not use the heavy material of granite on the superstructure of their stone temples, preferring the softer sandstone, as in the Kanchi Kailasanatha. They used granite only as leavenings among the mouldings of the "adishthana". They also used granite pillars sparingly.

On the other hand, it is difficult to believe that the artists did not master the engineering of rock excavation

sufficiently enough to use their knowledge successfully even in a difficult enterprise like the Bhima ratha. There are no signs of failure of this kind on any of the other rock monuments at Mamallapuram or elsewhere in the Pallava kingdom. A tradition preserved by an Indian writer in the last century[54] attributes the rent to the effects of lightning.

The Bhima ratha is forty-six feet long by twenty-five broad, and about twenty-six feet high. The unexcavated mass in the centre of the ground floor has a clearing on the four sides, five feet and three inches long to the east and the west, and three feet at the ends. There are four pillars and two pilasters on the facade, each with a sedent lion as the base and with spreading capitals. This pattern is repeated at the back. There are two more pillars in a second row from the facade and two again at the southern side Had the temple been completed, it would have enshrined an image of Lord Anantasayana.

The superstructure is highly impressive. On the cornice there are seven pairs of "kudus". Above there are thirteen miniature vimanas, alternating "salas", and "kutas" On the griva there are over each of the five intercolumniations shrine-like objects, each with two pilasters. The central one is the biggest The sikhara looks like an inverted country wagon, the "sala", which was to serve as the model for the gopuras in the stone temples of later times There would have been eighteen "kalasas" on the ridge. All these, along with the tridents at either end, have disappeared. It is stated that one of these tridents was recovered in a clearance of the drift sand that covered part of the Pandava rathas and that it was placed in the Arjuna ratha's shrine. A smaller version of the sikhara appears on the Ganesa ratha which, however, is not dominated by this member to the same extent that the Bhima ratha is.

The Draupadi ratha, a simple monument, looking like one of the huts which were once common and still exist, is

square on plan. It measures eleven feet each way. Its curvilinear roof rises to a height of about eighteen feet It is of the "kuta" type, but lacks the entablature and the griva. The domical sikhara is four sided and must have been crowned by a finial, now missing.[55] The monument belongs to the Nagara order, resembling the small vimanas depicted in "Arjuna's Penance" and on the facade of the Ramanuja mandapa.

The shrine contains a relief image of Goddess Durga, standing and with four arms. Four ganas hover above her. On the ground there are two devotees, one of whom seems to be offering his head in sacrifice, a scene sculptured in the Varaha rock temple too. Over the doorway is a makara torana and on either side there are "dvarapalikas" in niches. Each of the three outer walls contains an image of standing Durga, the figure on the east standing on the severed head of the buffalo demon. A lion, the goddess' mount, appropriately stands in front of the monument.

This ratha stands out among its neighbours for its graceful simplicity. The Pallava sculptors knew the artistic value of blank spaces, which was often ignored in later times They realised that fine effects could be produced by simple designs. The more one studies their work the more one admires their versatility.

They created in the Sahadeva ratha an apsidal temple, a form much less often adopted by later builders of structural temples, and virtually confined to Tondaimandalam. This ratha is a striking monument, set off, as if by purpose, by the huge elephant, which imitates its form, nearby. The ratha is eighteen feet long and about sixteen feet high In front of the shrine there is a small portico with two pillars The monument belongs to the Vesara order. The superstructure is in two storeys The architectural ordinance on the storeys is the same as in the other rathas except that "panjaras" have been carved in addition to "kutas" and "salas". It is a moot point to which

divinity this ratha was intended to be dedicated, Skanda, Brahma Sasta or Indra.

"A singularly elegant little temple", the Ganesa ratha which differs from the Bhima ratha in possessing an additional storey, two instead of one, is, however, worlds removed from that massive monument in the aesthetic feelings it induces. This ratha is all elegance and grace, everything in it in due place and proportion. While the "sala" superstructure of both this and the Bhima rathas has obviously been the model for the gopuras of later days, this monument is more easily perceived to be so because of the longer section of its two storeys.

On plan the Ganesa ratha is nineteen feet long and eleven feet and a quarter feet wide. It is twenty-eight feet high. The entablature consists of the usual formula. On the first storey there are five miniature vimanas and on the second four. The ridge of the "sala" is studded with nine "kalasas". At one end there is a "trisula". Its counter-part at the other end is missing.

The facade is made up of two pillars and two pilasters. There are five pairs of "kudus" on the cornice. The columns have sedent lions at the base, their central portion is chamfered and the capital is fluted. Adjoining the two pilasters there are "dvarapalas" on either side. The shrine contains an image of Lord Ganesa, which was introduced in later times.[56] In front of the shrine there is a small ardhamandapa. On one of its walls occurs the inscription which, through the epigraphical concordance, gives a clue to the authorship of all the Mamallapuram monuments.

While the Ganesa ratha is "the most nearly finished of any", the two Pidari rathas and the Valayankuttai ratha are the least finished of the non-Pandava rathas. These three are of two storeys each, and square on plan. The northern Pidari and the Valayankuttai monuments, however, belong to the Nagara

order, while the southern Pidari ratha is of the Dravida. The "garland" of miniature shrines appears on both the storeys of the Valayankuttai, but on only one in the northern Pidari ratha.

The Trimurthi rock temple is yet another schematic variation. It is an oblong, and consists of three shrines. On the facade to the south there is a relief of Goddess Durga with eight arms standing on a buffalo head Each of the three shrines is guarded by a pair of "dvarapalas". The three pairs are carefully differentiated in appearance. Those on the north wear beards, while those on the south are distinctly youthful looking. Two of the Gods enshrined are Lord Siva and Lord Vishnu. The third is either Lord Brahma or Lord Sastha. The temple is in two storeys. The "garland" runs over the first. The second storey is but vaguely sketched.

V

THE SCULPTURE

The Pallava architect astounded and edified his contemporaries with his recreation in rock of current structural styles It was now the turn of the Pallava sculptor to astonish the world. There is nothing in all the wide range of Indian art like the relief of "Arjuna's Penance". The second huge sculpture, miscalled the Krishna Mandapa, but really another relief depicting the story of Lord Krishna protecting, through a miracle, the good people of Brindavan from celestial fury, is not the sublime art its neighbour is. But at any site other than Mamallapuram it would be accounted worth its weight in gold.

These two sculptures illustrate the literary leanings of the makers of Mamallapuram. They were not only artists' artists but also artists of men of letters. It has been stated above that many a sculpture on the Pandava rathas follows its description in literature. The two huge reliefs illustrate entire incidents. So do two others at Mamallapuram, the smaller ones in the Mahishamardhani rock temple. The artists of Mamallapuram or at least their patrons were men of parts and attainments, not just vainglorious kings who wished to have some temples built to their credit they did not care how well or in what style. The maker of Mamallapuram was very knowledgeable and keenly interested in artistic problems and possibilities.

Rajasimha chose a Sanskrit classic famous in his times to illustrate in rock. This was Bharavi's "Kiratarjuniyam".[57] The poet who, according to the Avanti Sundari story, was a contemporary of Kubja Vishnuvardhana, the founder of the Eastern Chalukyan dynasty, and of Durvinita, the Western Ganga, wrote in the seventh century A.D. His fame was "widely diffused by about 600 A.D." A tribute to him occurs in the Aihole inscription of 634, where its writer says of himself,

"May that Ravikirti be victorious, who full of discernment has used the abode of the Jina, firmly built of stone, for a new treatment of his theme, and thus by his poetic skill has attained to the fame of Kalidasa and Bharavi".

Bharavi was associated with Kanchi in a manner of speaking. Dandin, the author of the Avanti Sundari story, was a descendant of Damodara, a friend of Bharavi's. Durvinita is belived to have written a commentary on the fifteenth "sarga" of "Kiratarjuniyam". If Rajasimha was casting about for a theme large enough for his exceptional artists to illustrate in rock, he could hardly have chosen any other than this.

The story of the hunter and Arjuna had been told in the "Vanaparva" of the "Mahabharata"[58] before Bharavi took it up. The story in the epic is an elaborate one, and Bharavi modified it a little. If the incidents related in the two versions are understood correctly, there will be no basis for identifying the sculpture as any other than the story of the penance that Arjuna performed to obtain invincible weapons from Lord Siva. The two together explain every aspect of the huge sculpture. The "Mahabharata" story is as follows:

When the Pandava brothers and Draupadi were in exile, Vyasa one day visited them. At his suggestion Arjuna was deputed to obtain weapons from Indra for the impending conflict with the Kauravas. Arjuna went to the Indrakila hill in the Himalayan forests and performed severe penance. Indra appeared to him and said that he should seek the weapons from Lord Siva.

Arjuna thereupon, commenced another course of penance. He was clad in tree bark, and deer skin, he lived on dry leaves and on fruit that had fallen down from trees. In the first month he ate fruit every third night, in the second month every sixth night, in the third once a fortnight, in the fourth once a month. He stood on one foot or on a toe tip. He

became emaciated.

The sages living in the Himalayan forests were perturbed at the fact that Arjuna, a warrior who had his bow and arrow and other weapons with him, should be performing such severe penance that the earth, heated by it, was emitting smoke. They went to Lord Siva to ask him to end this. The Lord told them that he knew what Arjuna wanted and would give it to him.

The Lord then went to the Indrakila hill. He was accompanied by Goddess Uma, like him dressed in hunter's garb. They were followed by bhutaganas, male and female, in thousands, in various forms and attire As they approached the still figure, they saw that a wild boar, in reality a Danava named Muka, was about to rush at him. Arjuna, finding his life imperilled, made to shoot an arrow at the animal. But the pretended hunter, who was Lord Siva, appeared before him and demanded that he desist, as he had marked out the boar for his own arrow. Arjuna ignored him and aimed an arrow at the animal. So at the same instant did the hunter. The boar fell dead.

A fierce dispute then ensued between the hunter and Arjuna. They traded insults and then fell to dealing physical blows. Arjuna aimed arrow after arrow at his opponent, but he caught them all with his hands. Furious, Arjuna decided to use his Gandiva bow which Lord Siva alone could withstand. But the mighty Gandiva too was ineffective. Arjuna, now become desperate, struck the hunter with the bow. The latter just snatched it away from his hands. Arjuna attacked his opponent with a sword, but the sword broke.

Arjuna then threw stones, trees and other missiles at the hunter, who, however, caught them all easily with his hands. Then the two fell awrestling. They wrestled until Arjuna fell down unconscious. When he came to himself, he

realised that his opponent could not possibly be a mortal. He set up an altar of clay for Lord Siva and began to worship him. All the garlands that he placed on the altar found their way to Lord Siva

Arjuna fell at the hunter's feet and begged his pardon. The Lord was pleased and appeared, along with Goddess Uma, as Kailasanatha. He told Arjuna that in his former life he had been Nara, a great sage, and a friend of Lord Narayana. He then gave Arjuna the Pasupata weapon.

After the Lord and the Goddess left the scene, a chariot came to Arjuna from Indra who desired him to visit Indraloka before returning to his brothers. In Indraloka he was received with great honours. But Urvasi, the celestial danseuse, attempted to tempt him He would not yield because of his respect for her as the "mother of the Purus" and as having been born from the thigh of Lord Narayana with whom he had been connected as Nara in his previous birth. She cursed him. He returned to his brothers with the weapon.

Bharavi makes some changes in and additions to this story. Before Indra meets Arjuna he sends a number of nymphs to disturb his penance They fail. Indra then comes to Arjuna disguised as an old and decrepit sage to rebuke him for performing penance while still clinging to his weapons and says that he could attain salvation there and then if only he would abandon his weapons. Arjuna replies that he seeks not salvation, but potent weapons, and expresses his determination to "wither away on this hill-top" until he succeeds. Indra is pleased at this and reveals his true self. He advises Arjuna to perform austerities to please Lord Siva.

In Bharavi it is to the complaining sages that Lord Siva tells of the fact that Arjuna was none other than Nara come to the mortal world, and that he had been born, along with Achyutha to annihilate evil-doers. In a later passage which

explains many aspects of the Mamallapuram sculpture, Bharavi says that as the hunter, the huntress and their retinue go to the Indrakiladri hill through forests, animals and birds forget their animosities and join the retinue. Not every one in this army approaches Arjuna. The Lord leaves behind most of it in a bog and is accompanied only by a few hunters covered by bushes and shrubs

Taken together, these versions explain every feature of the relief if it is interpreted as the penance of Arjuna. The emaciated penitent with his arms above his head is Arjuna. The majestic figure near him is Lord Siva with two bhutaganas by his side. The Deity in the shrine below is Lord Achyutha The sage with bowed head before the shrine is Nara. It is a forest on either side of the fissure which, of course, is the Ganges. The peaceful contiguity of lion and elephant and deer is explained in Bharavi. The forest is full of animals and birds and on its banks is a variety of scenes emphasising the location. The river contains denizens of the water in its flow. The semi-celestial beings who are all hurrying towards the fissure are attracted by the great event impending

No identification but that with Arjuna's penance will completely explain the details in the sculpture. The only possible alternative is the descent of the Ganges. But this breaks down at many points, for example, in the identification of the Deity in the small temple. Were the penitent above it Bhagiratha the Deity should be Lord Siva. In fact, it is Lord Vishnu or Lord Achyutha.

If this is an additional argument, Arjuna's penance was a theme that made wide appeal to the artists of many ages A famous panel at Deogarh illustrates the incident of Nara and Narayana. In South India the main story is illustrated at Vijayawada and Srisailam, the former in the ninth century and the latter probably in the sixteenth. At Lepakshi, also in the

sixteenth century, the story appears in immortal painting and relief sculpture.[59] The Mamallapuram achievement is the earliest of its kind in southern India.

At Mamallapuram itself there are another rendering and an imitation The rendering is contained in a frieze which once stood on the north side of the prakara wall of the Shore Temple There are two horizontal rows. In the upper one there are six persons, one of whom is standing on one leg, performing penance, and in the lower a penitent cat, two deer and a monkey. The figures in the upper panel can be interpreted as Vyasa and the Pandavas to whom he is tendering advice. The kneeling one is Arjuna about to receive the weapon from Lord Siva. The animals are meant to indicate that the location is the banks of the Ganges

The imitation[60] is rudimentary. There is a fissure on this rock too, but it is a very wide one There are figures of Lord Siva and Arjuna. They are not near the fissure, but on the upper part of of the southern section. Arjuna is practising austerities, but few other details have been carved. There are indications that lightning had struck the rock. That may be why this sculpture was not completed.

Proper identification of the theme adds to appreciation of the great sculptural achievement, but it is quite possible to understand its magnificence, apart from its significance, as a work of art pure and simple. Rajasimha's sculptors have shown themselves delicate and graceful artists elsewhere at Mamallapuram, capable of creating lyrical beauty, of evoking the tender grace of a day that is dead. Here they display other qualities They have called into being an entire world of imagination. It seems that the terrible or the ugly was foreign to the Pallava chisel. The Himalayan forest in which Arjuna performs his penance is indicated clearly enough. The idea is stressed time and again. But this forest is a peaceful forest, with no danger lurking at the corner, with no sense of hostility or

animosity. It is a forest of which gentle Sakuntala might have dreamt. There is humour in the hypocritical cat.

Here are Gods, demi-gods, human beings, animals, birds, mythical creatures; in fact, the entire gamut of the physical and intellectual world of the Pallavas. Lord Siva is a gigantic figure, portrayed in a dramatic mood. He seems to stand still, but the force of His personality seems about to break through the sculpture. There is suppressed force in the figure. This representation is an entirely new aspect of the Mamallapuram sculptor's genius.

He is indeed versatile. He turns his hand to tender animal studies, to studies of immobility, to simulation of rapid movement, and he arranges all these in an appropriate setting so much so that these contrasting activities and moods harmonise with each other. Bharavi's story gave him the lion and the lamb lying down in amity, but his own genius has reconciled many other very disparate elements This is not a static composition, but one of movement. Yet though the Gandharvas and the Kinnaras are flying in the air there is no sense of hurry.

The Mamallapuram elephants are the best observed in Indian art. They appear in many a mood, solemnly stalking forward, resting, permitting themselves a gambol or two, giving suck to their young. Always they are true to nature. The massive beast, which provided so many similes and metaphors to the writers of Pallava inscriptions impressed itself on the imagination of the people so forcibly that the artists had acquired the skill of the naturalists in depicting them

Nor are their monkeys less striking. But here they have permitted themselves the liberty of some humour, not directly as with the hypocritical cat on tha banks of the Ganges, but indirectly. The sculpture in the round of monkeys, one of them picking off lice from the hair of another, which now

stands near "Arjuna's Penance", might well seem a part of the forest scene, but it comes from near the Mukunda Nayanar temple. If a deer may scratch its nose with its hoof, it is surely permissible for one monkey to help another with its toilet. It is, however agreed that the Pallava lion is a failure.

The synoptic method of correlating various episodes within one framework, so brilliantly adopted at Amaravati, is carried to further triumphs here. At Amaravati, to give an example, the medallion depicting the subjugation of Nalagiri illustrates three events the rushing in of the mad elephant, the panic of the people in the street and in the houses, and the elephant's submission to the calm and unterrified Buddha These three events may be supposed to take place in a few minutes.

But in "Arjuna's Penance" not only different incidents, but different phases of time have to be reconciled in a forest scene. Arjuna has to appear not only in his own person, but also as the Nara that he had been in his previous birth. No subtleties are required in the northern part of the relief, all that was needed there being to indicate that the setting is the banks of the Ganges as it flows through a forest. But in the southern part two existences, no less, have to be suggested and that too in connection with each other.

This is achieved by placing in a vertical line Arjuna as a penitent and Lord Achyutha in his shrine. Lord Siva, who announces their affiliations, points with his lower left hand to the scene below, of Nara before the shrine with Lord Achyutha in it. This scene is to be considered an inset.

A difficult problem is, thus, solved. The solution may appear rather esoteric to generations which do not know Bharavi. But at the time the relief was created the story was familiar, and the arrangement would have been understood.

The last word here on "Arjuna's Penance", however, must not be praise for its ingenuity, but admiration for the sheer delicacy of its art. Everything that the Pallava artists touched was as golden sheen. Even the wild forest, with its flowing river, its bird and beast, its matted vegetation passes before us like a dream of fantasy. This is a fairy forest, a Forest of Arden on the Bay of Bengal.

In contrast to the stir of movement of "Arjuna's Penance", the other relief is a study in quiescence.[61] But this is calm after a storm. Indra, angered at the failure of the people of Brindavan to celebrate a festival in his honour, sends down hail and thunder to punish the recalcitrants. (In Pallava times this story must have been as familiar as the other one of Indra causing the city of Puhar to be submerged in punishment for the king's failure to hold a festival for him). The good people cower in fear, but salvation comes most unexpectedly.

Lord Krishna, their own comrade in frolic, lifts the mountain Govardhana and holds it aloft with the tip of a finger. This unusual umbrella protects the people from Indra's wrath. They had been flustered, it is true enough, before salvation came. But now all fear is gone and the pastoral village resumes its placid life The synoptic method of narrating events is not needed here to any great extent, but on the northern side of the sculpture Lord Krishna continues to hold up the mountain while in the rest of the canvas shepherds and shepherdesses go about their tasks.

The Krishna Mandapa is the only work of art in Mamallapuram which has been criticised as a failure. This is the opinion of a few critics. They say that the people of Govardhana show no signs of excitement at their deliverance. This view misses the nature of the synoptic method. The sculpture is to be regarded as being in two parts In one part occurs the miracle. Appropriately enough, the people near Lord Krishna and Balarama do show signs of astonishment. But in

the other part all is calm because the event is past. It may even be assumed that the scenes depicted here, the normal course of pastoral life, take place a few days later. It is not reasonable to expect people to wear expressions of astonishment on their faces for days together.

While "Arjuna's Penance" is a forest and river sculpture, the Krishna Mandapa is a study in pastoralism. Here the cow takes the pride of place that belongs to the elephant in the other relief. To Balarama's left a cow is being milked and at the same time it licks its calf. Elsewhere cows look on with placid contentment.

The shepherds and shepherdesses are life-like. Near the cow that is being milked a woman carries a bundle of fodder on her head, while with her left hand she holds a string of milk pots. A wood cutter carries an axe on his shoulder. A cowherd plays on the flute rather energetically. A few couples are dancing. Everywhere cows peer about.

Into this quiet Indian village have strayed a few animals from abroad. The griffins and the sphinx have come to the Brindavan of Mamallapuram by way of Sanchi and Amaravati. This is yet another indication of the continuity of art and literary traditions in the making of Mamallapuram.

Popular appreciation of this sculpture would be more pronounced had the mandapa in front of it not been built. This structure hampers a proper view. It has turned what was meant to be an open air sculpture into the back wall of a mandapa. On the pillars are the tell-tale crouching lions, an insignia of Vijayanagar times This mandapa is the only considerable structural addition at Mamallapuram after the Pallavas left the site apart, of course, from the enlargement of the Talasayana Perumal temple in the centre of the village, also in Vijayanagar days

If a conjecture may be hazarded, this mandapa might have been built about the same time as the horse court in the first prakara of the Bhaktavatsala temple at Tirukkazhukunram[62]. That temple is of the thirteenth century, but the horse court must have been built later This court is a far more ambitious venture than the plain Mamallapuram mandapa. It has sixty pillars and each of these carries powerful sculptures not unlike those in the celebrated Srirangam court. But, to the extent needed, the same hand was at work in the Krishna Mandapa. The Tirukkazhukunram temple is associated with Mamallapuram epigraphically and through its 'sthalapurana'. King Suraguru, who appears on the pillars of the colonnade near the apsidal Pallava structure, is said to have ruled from Mamallapuram.

In making the ten rathas and the reliefs the Mamallapuram artists were pioneers with no followers Their rock temples virtually bring an old tradition to an end, while their structural stone temples inaugurate a tradition that continues.

VI

The Rock Shrines

The rock mode, which began at Mandagappattu in Mahendra I's time virtually ceases at Mamallapuram.[63] This cannot be an accident. To denigrate rock architecture ill becomes the student of Indian art. It has produced some of the greatest ornaments of the Indian genius, the Kailasa at Ellora, for example, the rathas and the reliefs at Mamallapuram. The Rashtrakutas perpetuated the idiom, but in the Pallava kingdom the royal aesthete decided that it was played out. He realised that the future belonged to the structural temples, and he might also have thought that beyond 'Arjuna's Penance' and the two panels in the Mahishamardhani temple no rock sculptor could possibly go.

However this might have been, the Mamallapuram rock temples are practically the last of their kind in Tondaimandalam. The Pandya region continued to produce excellent rock art as at Kazhugumalai, Malayadipatti and Narttamalai, where a rock temple created by a Pallava tributary contains nine images of Lord Vishnu. But in Tondaimandalam the artists believed that the possibilities of rock art had almost been exhausted.

Their sculptures help to place the eight main Mamallapuram rock temples considered in this chapter in their probable order of creation within Rajasimha's reign on the principle that a temple with no sculpture is early and that the more or striking sculptures a temple contains the later it must be. It may be supposed that as the artists gained in experience and confidence they felt emboldened to add ambitious sculptures.

Viewed in this light, the order may be taken to be the Kotikal, the Dharmarajah, the Koneri, the Atiranachanda, the Ramanuja, the Varaha, the Adivaraha and the Mahishamardhani. The blaze of sculpture in the last three temples, amazingly

blinding as their makers proceeded from one to the other, certainly sets these apart from their fellows. To talk of the inadequacies of rock art in their context is ridiculous. There is nothing in the others which can be placed alongside the Gangadhara at Tiruchi or even the celestials in the Orukal mandapa at Tirukkazhukunram.

The Kotikal mandapa is a simple excavation, consisting of an oblong ardhamandapa, with a square shrine on the back wall. It seems to have had a structural mukhamandapa, to judge from the sockets in front of the facade and holes above the cornice. The facade is composed of two pilasters, the pillars have been divided into their component parts This is however, all that has been done to them, and they present a heavy view.

But the sculptures of the dvarapalikas, on either side of the shrine, which, it can be deduced from their presence, was dedicated to Goddess Durga, are a different matter. Rather resembling those in the Draupadi ratha they are striking figures. Wearing nearly the same kinds of ornament and dress, they differ in the nature of the weapons they carry. The northern dvarapalika bears a sword in her right arm, while the southern grasps the top of a bow the lower end of which is fixed between the toes of her right foot slightly raised for the purpose, an unusual posture.

A flight of three steps leads from the ardhamandapa to the shrine. There is a moonstone on the floor, but the two parapets and one of the steps were chiselled away in subsequent times. The shrine has no image. Its facade contains all the mouldings of the "adhisthana", the "bhitti" pilasters, and the cornice with a "kudu". This temple achieves its artistic effects through judicious restraint.

It is not clear whether a name carved on one of the pillars has any bearing on the authorship of the monument

"Sri Vamankusa", in Pallava Grantha, might have been the name of a Pallava subordinate, probably a Telugu Choda. The name also occurs on the rim of the so called "Gopi's Churn" nearby.

Rajasimha himself has announced his authorship of the Dharmaraja mandapa. His Pallava Grantha epigraph here belongs to the decisive concordance. It names the temple "Atyantakama Pallavesvaragrahm".

The form of the facade and of the mukha and ardhamandapas is the same as in the Kotikal mandapa. The facade is made up of two pillars and two pilasters. A similar number of columns divides the frontal mandapa from the distal. The pillars, though still unevolved, are rather slender and tall.

Of the three shrines on the back wall with a common "adhisthana", the central one is the largest, extending well into the ardhamandapa. The "adhisthana" has only four mouldings. The dvarapalas on either side of the central shrine have been chipped away, but not so completely that their lineaments cannot be made out. They were two armed and faced the front. Vaishnavaite emblems were carved on the facade in later times.

The central shrine must have been dedicated to Lord Siva. Images of Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma would have been installed in the other two shrines. This temple marks some advance on the Kotikal mandapa as a work of rock art in the increased number of the shrines and in the look of the columns.

The progress that the Koneri mandapa records over its two predecessors consists mainly in the elaboration of its five shrines, and in the emergence of some form of an entablature on the facade. The cornice has ten "kudus", one of them ill formed. Above it are five "salas", all interconnected and

impressive in appearance.

The columns on the facade and inside differ greatly in style. The four pillars which together with two pilasters form the facade are slender, but still demarcated only rudimentarily, while those inside are works of art. Their capitals are cylindrical, the intervening area has sixteen sides.

The first, third and fifth shrines project well into the ardhamandapa, while the other two are recessed. Flights of four steps lead to each of the shrines, An attempt has been made to differentiate the projecting shrines from the recessed ones in features of adornment. Some of the details in this part of the temple are incomplete or damaged.

The five pairs of dvarapalas, each to one shrine, present a study in identity and contrast. Each member of a pair is like the other, but each pair differs from the others. The first pair on the north has been badly damaged One of the figures has been completely obliterated. while the other is much mutilated. The next pair, to the south, faces front with a slight inclination to the semi-profile. The southern figure wears two curved horns behind his headgear. Horns also appear on the head of the southern dvarapala, in the next group guarding the central shrine The two figures have a royal mien. They wear crowns and long garlands.

The next pair has rather an angry appearance, with side tusks and staring eyes. The last pair somewhat resembles the central one. The iconography of these ten sculptures relates to the mainfestation of the Godhead enshrined in the five shrines. But it has not been possible to determine what these manifestations are in the absence of inscriptions or any other evidence.

On the facade the cornice is an elaborate one. Above it stand five "salas". The cornice contains five pairs of

"kudus" each below the "salas', on the entablature and above the intercolumniation.

The "Atiranachandesvarargrham" at Saluvankuppam, an indisputable creation of Rajasimha's, lacks the entablature, though this feature has been sketched out. This temple is notable not only for the two inscriptions identical in contents, but different in script, but also for the three Somaskandas it contains, one in the single shrine, the others on the walls of the ardhamandapa. The facade is rather simple, consisting of two pillars and two pilasters, all of them comparatively unornamented and rather heavy looking.

One of the architecturally finest types of rock temples at Mamallapuram, the Ramanuja mandapa has suffered much by way of alteration and mutilation. Even so, and despite the fact that the unsightly pillars of a later structural mandapa obscure a clear view of the facade, the monument is an impressive one.

The facade contains two pillars and two pilasters, all of an advanced type, with sedent lions at the base. There is a remarkable addition, two model vimanas [64] on either side of the pilasters. There were also two dvarapalas nearby, but they have been excised.

Some of the features of the entablature appear for the first time in Pallava art. There is a "procession" of bhutas above the corbel. One of these "ganas" has the head of an elephant. If he is Ganapati, this is the earliest representation of the God in Pallava times (The large image on the facade of Mahendra I's Vasantesvara temple at Vallam, like that of Jyestha on the other side, is believed to be an addition of later times). Above this frieze is a number of curved brackets, the first appearance in the Pallava idiom of this feature, common in Chalukyan rock art. The cornice contains four pairs of "kudus", each holding lotus medallions, and not the

customary human faces. Above there is a row of five "salas".

At the back of the large oblong ardhamandapa, the original three shrines have been made into one. These three shrines were separated by walls, but the walls, together with the sculptures of dvarapalas on either side of the central shrine, have been removed.

Pallava rock art reaches its full development in the Varaha, Adivaraha and Mahishamardhani temples. Their crowning glory is the sculptures they bear. The synoptic treatment in 'Arjuna's Penance' and the miracle of Brindavan is one aspect of the Pallava sculptural genius; another depicts contrasts between states of being and feeling. It cannot be doubted that the sculpting of the movement of war and of the peacefulness of repose on two walls opposite each other in the Mahishamardhani temple was undertaken not only to illustrate passages in the 'Markandeya Purana'[65] but also to depict action and inaction as directly contrasted.

The architectural ordinance of the Varaha temple is a simple one, but the monument enters high art through its four great sculptures. On the facade are two pillars and two pilasters, in no way distinguished for style. The single shrine projects forward into the ardhamandapa. In front of the monument is a depression in the form of a small tank. It is not possible to determine whether it is coeval with the monument or was created in later times.

Of the four sculptures the subjugation of Bali,[66] the only link the site has with its popular name, is a spirited rendering in which, however, the pathos of the situation in which Bali finds himself is also depicted. It is said that the details follow the directions in the 'Vaikhanasagama'. The sculpture of an earlier incarnation of the Lord as the primeval boar is notable for the clarity of its composition. There is a large number of figures, but there is no sense of over-crowing.

The Durga, one of the innumerable representations of the Goddess at Mamallapuram, compares with any of them in sculptural skil and iconographic interest. The Gaja Lakshmi panel, a popular Pallava theme, is a study in auspiciousness.

The Adivaraha temple scintillates with sculpture, three themes of which occur in the Varaha temple, those of Goddess Durga and Gaja Lakshmi on the walls and of Lord Varaha in the shrine. Gangadhara Siva, to be compared with the rendering of the same mighty theme at Tiruchi, and Harihara add to the repertoire of great Mamallapuram sculptures.

The identification of the two royal groups[67] depends on the authorship of the temple. In the terms of the argument in this book, the seated king, over whose sculpture there is the Pallava Grantha inscription, "Sri Simhavinna Pottr-athirajan", is Narasimha II. A honorific of his, "Narasimha Vishnu", appears in Kanchipuram.[68] The Chola name of the Adivaraha temple, "Paramesvara Maha Varaha Vishnugrahm", is based on another cognomen of Rajasimha's, "Paramesvara" The hand of the religious eclectic is to be observed in the Siva name and a Siva inscription in this Vaishnava temple. The standing royal personage on the opposite wall is Mahendra, the same who constructed the Mahendravarmesvaragrahm in the Kanchi Kailasanatha temple.

With the Mahishamardhani temple rock art in Mamallapuram, in the Tamil region, in fact, reaches its ultimate. Endowed with a superb location, its art is highly advanced, though the monument is still incomplete. The facade, composed of four pillars and two pilasters, looks out across a ravine at the town below and the sea beyond. One of the pillars has been removed and placed in the structural mandapa in front of the Adivaraha temple round the corner.

The ardhamandapa is graced by an attractive porch in front of the central shrine. This shrine contains a power-

ful sculpture of Somaskanda in which Chandesa possibly appears. The great panels, on the walls, drawn from the "Markandeya Purana", are in the tradition of "Arjuna's Penance" in their large conception and almost superhuman skill.

Of the other rock temples less finished than any of these, the most notable is the Panchapandava mandapa. Had it been completed, there would have been a circumambulatory passage around the shrine. Even in its present state there is something bold and powerful about this monument.

An essay in the horrific appears at Saluvankuppam. The so called "Tiger's Cave"[69] is ringed round by yali heads. It is strange that the same royal taste which produced the lyricism of the Shore Temple should have sanctioned this study in the bizarre. It is another indication of the eclecticism which cannot be too strongly emphasised in an examination of the authorship of the Mamallapuram monuments.

The Pulipudar mandapa and an unnamed temple near the Koneri mandapa are interesting as showing how the Mamallapuram artists set to work. The facades of these two monuments are somewhat similar, but the former was meant to have five cells and the latter only one. However, the unnamed temple was perhaps designed with a circumambulatory passage around the shrine, like the Panchapandava.

VII

The Structural Temples

Since Rajasimha's three structural stone temples at Mamallapuram belong, as it were, to the second chapter of the history of this idiom in the Tamil region, only by a few years removed from those built in the reign of his father, it is necessary to trace these beginnings. While the Pallava artists could undertake breath-taking enterprises in sculpture and could make revolutionary departures in the handling of rock, they were very cautious and circumspect in building with stone. It was not until they had obtained considerable experience that they ventured to use granite. They felt their way cautiously. This hesitation is, no doubt, to be explained by the lack or inadequacy of tradition in using this material. Rock, however, they could handle as to the manner born.

The first step towards the Pallava structural stone temple was taken in the same reign as the excavated rock temple. (No conclusions can be drawn about the Gunadaraviccuram from its present condition). A pillar with the honorifics of Mahendra I carved on it formed part of the "Purana mandapa" in the third prakara of the Ekamranatha temple at Kanchi. Evidently in Mahendra I's reign there were constructed a few mandapas of brick which contained pillars of stone. Similar pillars bearing cognomens of Narasimha I have been found at Sivanvayal and Kuram. The Kuram pillars must have formed part of the mandapa where, as the Kuram plates of Paramesvara I say, the "Mahabharatha" was expounded and where fire and water were maintained. The same record says that tiles were used in building a temple. The tiles were, no doubt, also used in such mandapas as were found necessary.

By Paramesvara I's reign, structural stone temples had

begun to be built, but evidently the experience so gained was considered inadequate in dealing with hard stones. Rajasimha's temples at Mamallapuram are all of the softer sandstone. But as a kind of preparation for the future, there are a few granite pillars in the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram, where, in addition, the first and the last mouldings of the "adhisthana" are of the same stone. Pillars of this material with some of the honorifics of Rajasimha occur in Vayalur and Tirupporur in mandapas built in later times incorporating these columns. There is a certain cautiousness in carving the features of the capitals.

But, and this is characteristic of the Pallava genius, the self-denial in regard to granite did not prevent the creation of lovely structural stone temples. The choice of one particular stone in preference to another has certainly influenced the mode of sculpture. Carvings on granite are of shallower relief, for example. But that has made little difference to the quality of the sculptures. Inscriptions on granite have lasted better than those on sandstone.

The structural stone situation at the time the Mamallapuram artists commenced their labours was that at least two examples in this new medium had been built, and that, though their experience was, thus, limited, they could draw upon the models of the existing timber and brick structures. With characteristic self-confidence, the "Agamapramanah" that Rajasimha was, the "Chitrakarapuli" that he too might have called himself plunged into the high enterprise of clothing the truths of his religion in the visible garb of stone-temples. He had done with rock excavations. These had rewarded him with remarkable sculpture. But the man of art cannot live by sculpture alone; he must have architecture. This could be obtained as he wished only in structures of stone.

Rajasimha heightened the impressions these buildings in a new idiom would make on his subjects by locating two of

them on hills and, with remarkable self-confidence, a third by the sea. If it is reasonable to believe that the Pallikkonda Aruliya Perumal shrine in the Shore Temple existed before his time, perhaps even in the second century A.D., when Bhutam Alvar sang of the Lord by the sea, his innovative spirit was not checked, but challenged rather. That the two shrines he would add to the old, one to its east and the other to its west, were Saiva would not have struck him as discordant, for the stream of Hinduism ran from a single source in those happy times[70] and, for what this fact is worth, his own name is but another form of the Lord in the middle shrine. However, what must have struck the royal innovator most was the fact that an image existed all by itself, with the waves beating upon it. He would improve upon this location by building another shrine even nearer the sea.

But Rajasimha has not been served well at Mamallapuram. The temple that he located on the top of the hill is but a shadow of itself, its superstructure totally lost. The Mukunda Nayanar temple happens to be a simple, even severe looking, construction. It too has suffered badly with time. Nothing can take away from the grandeur of the Shore Temple, but it would be even more striking had it survived as it left the hands of its builders.

In building the Shore Temple its makers had to reckon with the existence of the image of Lord Talasayi, enshrined or not, and with the contiguity of the sea. Nothing in all Mamallapuram is more characteristic of the "atyantakama" that Rajasimha was than that he should have chosen a location like this. One result is that the agamic rules regarding the siting of ritual accessories like the flagstaff in front of the main shrine which in this temple is the eastern (as may be deduced from the fact that this shrine, the Kshatriyasimhesvara, is larger in size than the western, the Rajasimhesvara, with a taller vimana, and that it has a prakara of its own), have necessarily had to be ignored. A second result is that the two existing

vimanas are out of alignment, the western tending towards the north. Nevertheless, the temple is a coherent architectural whole, harmonising elements which might, particularly in those early days of the idiom, have proved discordant or inchoate.

The temple has suffered much from time and other agencies of dilapidation. Fergusson writes, "The surrounding walls of the court have been much ruined, but excavations made in 1884 revealed the lines of these where they had fallen, and of other buildings in the west half of the court."

From the large number of small Nandi images, many of them broken, which are to be found among the debris, and some of which have been placed on a low wall, it may be deduced that they stood originally on proper "prakara" walls. A visitor says in a book published in 1920, "Excavations have uncovered an outer court enclosed by walls the tops of which support closely set figures of bulls". On the storeys of the two vimanas which these walls enclose Nandis are replaced by bhutas blowing conches.

Thus, as the devotee approached the temple in the palmy days of the Pallavas, he would have seen a compactly built enclosure with perhaps four incipient gopuras, and a number of Nandi images on the top of the walls. How many vimanas he would have seen is a moot point. The middle shrine must have possessed a vimana. Rajasimha could scarcely have failed to add one to it if lacking. This vimana would have been a "sala" as was appropriate for the image in the shrine. It is said that there are signs on what has survived of the superstructure of a vimana having once stood there.

The taller eastern vimana is of four storeys. It is square on plan upto the griva, and thence octagonal. The "garland" of miniature shrines does not appear on the first storey, but it is present on the top of the ardhamandapa in front. On

the first storey are placed, instead, sedent lions at the four corners. On the fourth storey, also without the "garland", there are at the four corners bhutas squatting on their haunches and blowing conches. Looking at this vimana from the outside one might think that, in fact, it has five storeys. This is because the wall of the narrow prakara appertaining to this shrine is less tall than the first storey of the vimana and the "garland" on the top of this wall looks like an additional storey. At the rear there is a gap, filled partially by the elements of the "garland" on the top of the Vishnu shrine.

On the eastern wall of the Siva shrine "prakara" there is an incipient gopura. It is made up of an opening with a miniature "sala" vimana above it. It is rather smaller than the front one in the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram. These two are the earliest of their kind in the Tamil region.

The eastern shrine contains a relief of Somaskanda on the back wall. There is a linga in front of this relief, sixteen sided, fluted, polished and without a pedestal. It has been damaged. There are panels of Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma on the side walls. The southern and western walls of the shrine have been patched up. There is a drawing of the nineteenth century which indicates a rent in the walls of the contiguous Vishnu shrine, and obviously this shrine too had fallen out of repair. There are some sculptures on the northern wall. They include Lord Tripurantaka, Lord Narasimha and Goddess Durga

In the passage in front of the shrine there are "dvarapalas" on either side of the entrance and sculptures of Lord Vishnu with Goddess Lakshmi and of Lord Subramania with His Consort. Nearby there are other sculptures which appear to be historical.[71] If they are, here is the example which Nandivarman Pallavamalla followed in his Vaikunta Perumal temple. But while the sculptures at Kanchipuram are reasonably entire here they are very obscure. The pilasters carved on

the walls of the shrine and its prakara have for their base not only rampant lions but also elephants, rams, serpents and bhutas.

The lamp pillar in front of the temple, amidst the waves, is much battered, but it is a symbol of high historical romance. When lighted at night, it must have served as a kind of beacon for the shipping in the roads. As the emigrants of culture and trade sailed for the south-eastern countries, many of them must have cast a longing look[72] at the receding homeland and taken the light flickering in the darkness for a good omen.[73] The lamp stand intrigued many of the foreign visitors at Mamallapuram in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and fantastic were the explanations they offered of what it could have been. A few took it for a linga.

Whether the image of Lord Talasayi was originally located in a shrine or was placed in the open cannot be determined. Bhutam and Tirumangai Alvars and "Avantisundarikathasara" speak of the image as being washed by the sea. According to the Sanskrit work, "the sea brushed its feet with gentle ripples". It is perhaps reasonable to assume from this that the image lay in the open. This possibility is strengthened by the fact that Rajasimha's name for the shrine, 'Narapatisimha Pallava Vishnugrahm', is engraved on the entrance, in Pallava Grantha characters. Rajasimha could have rebuilt in stone the old brick and timber structure.

The image is unconventional. The Lord is represented as reclining on the bare earth, a fact noted by Bhutat Alvar. There is no serpent couch. The image has two hands. Bhudevi is absent. So are the 'ayudhas'. According to the 'Vaikhanasa agama', this "abhicharika" type of image may be placed in a "water fort" as well as in a "forest fort", in the kingdom of another king, and in the enemy's direction. Its contiguity to the sea, no doubt, makes this shrine a kind of "water fort".

The shrine is rectangular on plan. On the outer walls there are carvings of Lord Vishnu with Gajendra and Lord Krishna dancing on Kaliya.

The western vimana is in three storeys on a plan square upto the griva, but octogonal above. The 'garland' appears on the second storey, but there are conch blowing bhutas on the third. This shrine shares its 'adhisthana' with the rock platform on which reclines Lord Talasayi in the contiguous shrine. As in the eastern vimana, the objects of worship are a Somaskanda panel and a linga. Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma are included in the former group. The linga has no pedestal.

In front of the shrine there are three balipithas, two in a row, the second slightly out of alignment. In the vicinity there are foundations of some buildings, probably mandapas. It was the discovery in 1912 of Sanskrit verses in Grantha Pallava script on the plinths of two structures on the western side of the second courtyard that led to the temple being ascribed to Rajasimha. The honorifics contained in this epigraph are his. A part of this inscription occurs on the Kanchi Kailasanatha temple.

When it was entire, the temple covered a large area. The foundations of two mandapas have survived, both to the east of the main entrance, which was on the west. The one nearer the western Siva shrine is square on plan. This structure was connected with a larger mandapa to its west, oblong in shape. Outside the western entrance, in the vicinity of the three balipithas, there might have been some small structures. But this is only a surmise.

Outside the walls, both to north and south, there are foundations of other structures. It is unlikely that these buildings were coeval with the temple. For one thing, their location would be un-agamic. For another, the stones seem to be less old than those of the temple. Perhaps the buildings were

part of the measures taken since about a century now to preserve the temple from the sea. But this, again, is speculation.

Some of the visitors to the temple in the last century have written of it or drawn it. But their evidence is not of much help in reconstructing the temple in its original form. A writer speaks of its seven walls, a later one of three. The temple could hardly have had six prakaras. Another writer refers to the image of Pallikonda Aruliya Deva as being "behind the second wall". The Vishnu shrine could be in this position only if viewed from the western Siva shrine. If so, the description is hardly accurate. These accounts should be treated with reserve.

That there was a gopura on the western side is clear enough. The existence of another on the north may be deduced from the remains, reinforced by a drawing of the middle nineteenth century, of the northern prakara wall. The drawing indicates the base of a gopura, consisting of a few slabs. At about this place there is a gap in the wall today. On either side there are the lower portions of what seem to be "dvarapalas". There are no such indications on the southern wall. But it is reasonable to assume that there was a gopura on the south too. If so, the temple had gopuras on all the four sides.

Near the Shore Temple there are some rock sculptures,[74] perpetually washed by the sea. One of these is in the likeness of a lion. In its stomach there is a square excavation. This contains an image of Goddess Durga. At the base of the sculpture there are a deer at rest and a bhuta blowing a conch.

The Shore Temple is set off by two other temples at Mamallapuram, one of which has been eviscerated and the other is in a severely unornamented style. The latter is called

the Mukunda Nayanar temple, a name of unknown date and origin. An inscription discovered in 1967 names it the Thiru-mugaliappamudaiyar temple. This too could not have been its original name, for 'Mugalinagan' is a name which occurs in Chola epigraphy.

The temple had to be dug out of the sand and this has not improved its appearance. It is totally devoid of ornaments partly because the reddish granite of which it is made appears to have presented some problems to the sculptors in their early stage of experience. The pilasters are totally plain, the bases unsculptured, the components of the capitals crude and dis-proportionate.

The temple is a small structure, consisting of the sanctum and the mukhamandapa. The finial and the upper parts of the sikhara have disappeared. The vimana is in two storeys. It is square below, but what remains of the superstructure is octogonal. There is a Somaskanda relief on the back wall of the shrine with a linga in front, cylindrical and polished. The monkey group, now placed near "Arjuna's Penance", was dug out of sand near this temple. But it could hardly have belonged to it either.

The Olakkanesvara temple has suffered not only from neglect but also from vandalism. The entire superstructure is missing. It appears that at one time a huge banyan tree was growing on the top of the temple. As if that were not enough, the authorities, for reasons best known to themselves, selected a building of Pallava antiquity in which to locate a lighthouse. This lighthouse functioned until the present one was built in 1900. By that time extensive damage had been done.

Eviscerated though, thus, the temple has been, there is still a graceful simplicity about what remains of it. All that has survived is a square building. The entrance was towards west, for there are two pairs of "dvarapalas" on either side of

an ugly modern wooden door. One pair stands facing west in the usual fashion, but the other pair has been carved on the narrow sides, one of the figures facing north and the other south.

There are still some striking sculptures on the walls, chiefly Dakshinamurthi and Ravana attempting to shake Kailasa. Since the temple stands on the top of a rock excavation below there is a cornice like member with "kudus" where the "adishthana" would normally be. As in the Shore Temple, Rajasimha's artists had to modify the agamic injunctions when he selected a difficult site on which to build this temple.

The name now given to this temple is thoroughly inappropriate. The temple was under worship till about the last century. It appears that an ollock of oil, bought out of contributions by the shopkeepers in the town, was used daily in maintaining a perpetual lamp in the temple. From this pratice was derived the name of which the present one is a corruption.

An inscription on rock in Saluvankuppam refers to a structural temple which has now disappeared. A tall linga, a group of Saptamatriha sculptures and large quantities of architectural stones found in the vicinity might have belonged to this temple

VIII

THE VIJAYANAGAR HAND

The Pallava mark on Mamallapuram is, of course, omnipresent. Of the Chola days there is only epigraphical evidence. But the Vijayanagar hand is still to be seen. The Talasayana Perumal temple, the largest monument in Mamallapuram, a site of little dainties, is authentic Vijayanagar in style. In front of the temple, extending a good way towards the seashore, there were a number of structures, of which only the 'Rayagopura' and the "Dolotsava" mandapa, the latter much admired by foreign artists in the last two centuries, now stand.

The earliest inscription on the walls of the Talasayana Perumal temple belongs to the times of Tikanna Gandagopala, the Telugu Choda, who ruled over the Mamallapuram territory from about 1230 as a vassal of Rajaraja III Chola. In its present form, therefore, the temple was in existence from early in the thirteenth century. But since fragments of earlier Chola epigraphs are found in the temple, it is still older.

The question is how much older. Some of the inscriptions it carries call the temple that of "Talasayana" Perumal, but these are of the middle ages. A contrast could be drawn between "Jalasayana" Perumal, He Who reclines on the seacoast, and "Talasayana" Perumal, He Who reclines on land, but for the fact that the image in the Shore Temple shrine is located on bare earth, without the Adisesha couch. When the hymners say that the Lord is reclining on earth, do they mean that the image in the Shore Temple shrine does so or do they refer to the temple inland? "Jalasayana" Perumal may be taken to be the image in the Shore Temple, while "Talasayana" Perumal is enshrined in the later Vijayanagar temple.

Bhutam, in the second century A.D., takes Him to task for

reclining on earth. "Is there no one to check or control this God? As a charioteer of Arjuna, He roamed about battle-fields and thereby exposed Himself to great risks. Again at an earlier point of time He took Himself away from Sita Devi following a deer. As if these are not enough, He who always uses the cool and refreshing Adisesha as His couch lays Himself down on bare earth. Very nice indeed!"[75] This passage refers to the image now enshrined in the Shore Temple, but then perhaps located in the open or placed in a brick and timber temple. When Tirumangai, in the eighth century, says that the 'Lord of the discus" is in the company of the "Dancer of the burning ground" he is referring to the same image, but in the Shore Temple which had been constructed by then.

The Talasayana Perumal temple must have originated in later times, probably early Chola. Reconstructed in its present form under Vijayanagar, it was one of the leading temples in Tondaimandalam in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. They did not stint for size in those days. The temple complex included another gopura, the dainty little 'Dolotsava' mandapa, another mandapa with an image of Lord Hanuman and yet another mandapa, where Bhutam reputedly took his rise.

Till the nineteenth century gifts were made to this temple, indicating that it continued to be a leading centre of piety. It is still one for the people of the surrounding region. It was in a badly dilapidated[76] condition for some time early in the last century.

The sculpture of the Saptamatrikas found in the north of the town is a Pallava achievement. The expressions of the Goddesses are individualised. The location of the sculptures, in the northern part of the old village, is significant because it follows the directions in the vastu texts.

A grand Vijayanagar relic stands on the eastern fringe

of the hill. This is a gopura, its magnificence sparkling out despite its unfinished state and empty location. The door jambs, carved with bold reliefs, are of the kind seen in great temples like Chidambaram and also in the Bhaktavatsala temple at Tirukhazhikunram.

There are signs of structural buildings having stood on the hill. There are holes in the rock obviously made to receive foundations. A palace or some other grand building might have stood here in Pallava times. The "lion seat" lends strength to this suggestion. Then, there is the reference in the 'Avantisundarikathasara' to "a lofty palace, all in white" which Dandin and his friends saw, though the passage adds that "tumultuous billows dashed against" its base.

It is probable that in the middle ages too there was a palace, if not royal, at least baronial. The tradition which connects the Velugotti family with Mamallapuram at about this time is strong, as indicated later in this book. Where the Pallava had once built a palace was an ideal location for his successors if they too were minded to erect one for themselves.

Elsewhere in the township there are clear signs of artistic, or at least engineering, activity on the rocks, steps here, mortice holes there. These, taken together with the number of incomplete monuments and the attempt to imitate "Arjuna's Penance", suggest that there was something like a school of art in Pallava Mamallapuram.

IX

THE CULT

Since the Mamallapuram temples arose in the wake of the great Hindu revival, headed not by reformers or philosophers, but by mystics and poets, the cult they were created to express was not sectarian. The surprise some scholars have expressed at the Saiva inscription in the Vaishnavaite temple of Adivaraha is misplaced. There was then no antagonism among the Hindu sects. It would have been surprising if there was. The Alvars and the Nayanmars had combined to sing the heretical faiths out of the Tamil land, and Rajasimha, while a Saivaite, was the last person to sanction or promote that kind of hostility which in later times led to the mutilation of some of his monuments.

The cult followed in the Mamallapuram temples was determined by two main factors. The first was the inheritance from the previous centuries of Hinduism in the Tamil region, of which the only evidence available is the Sangam poems. The second was the directives of the "agamas".

"By the end of the ninth century A.D., there was a considerable degree of consolidation and uniformity in the different regions (of India) on the basic norms of image worship in temples". This came about in stages. "Agamic" notions occur in the Vedas, but the earliest texts to contain the directives are mainly the "puranas" and the "samhitas", from about the second century A.D. The most notable of these texts are "Vishnudarmottara" of about the sixth-seventh century A.D., "Brhatsamhita", about a century earlier, and "Agnipurana". In the subsequent period, starting in the sixth century, the rituals for the daily worship of the consecrated image begin to be systematised. The leading texts of this period are "Vaikanasagama", "Kamikagama" and "Mayamata". The main "agama" period began in the ninth century.

Therefore, the 'agamic' injunctions were still to reach their final form when Rajasimha created his temples at Mamallapuram. This fact accounts for the nature of the cult followed in his temples. In only one rock temple, the Adivaraha, and in one of the Shore Temple shrines were images of Lord Vishnu consecrated as the sole object of worship. In the Dharmaraja, Ramanuja and Trimurthi mandapas. He appears or appeared as one of the Trinity. The Kotikal mandapa was dedicated to Goddess Durga. So, of course, was the Draupadi ratha. Indra might have been worshipped in the Sahadeva ratha The suggestion that this ratha was designed for Chandesa seems unjustified. In all the other temples, where possible, Lord Siva was worshipped.

There are Somaskanda sculptures in the topmost storey of the Dharmaraja ratha, in the central shrine of the Mahishamardhani mandapa, in the Atiranachanda mandapa (with two more on the walls of the ardhamandapa), and in the eastern and western shrines the Shore Temple and in the central shrine of the Mukunda Nayanar temple. The sculpture has been obliterated in the Ramanuja mandapa. There are no traces of the original bas reliefs in the three shrines of the Dharmaraja mandapa. There is a standing image of Lord Siva in the central shrine of the Trimurthi temple. The Vishnu image under worship in the Adivaraha temple is the original one.

There are lingas in front of the Somaskanda panels in the Saiva shrines of the Shore Temple and in the Atiranachanda mandapa. There are no sockets in any of the three shrines of the Dharmaraja mandapa, but they are to be found in all the five of the Koneri mandapa and in the central shrine of the Mahishamardhani temple.

The question is what the object or objects of worship were in the Saiva temples, the Somaskanda panel or the linga. It has been suggested that the panel was the original object

of worship and that the linga was set up later. None of the rock temples contains a linga fashioned out of rock as could have been easily provided and as, in fact, it has been in many of the Chalukyan, Pandyan and Muttaraiyar monuments and also at Melacheri, an aberrant Pallava temple. The argument is that lingas, where they are found or where they once stood, to judge from the sockets, were introduced in later times.

The view is based mainly on the argument, or supposition, that the "varimarga" and "pranala", necessary to let the "abisheka" water run out of the sanctum, have been created in later times in the Pallava temples. A few of the illustrations are not convincing, but there is no reason to dispute the assertion that the Somaskanda panel was worshipped in the Mamallapuram temples. The problem relates to the lingas.

Three stages in the "ritual worship of the main deity in the cella in the Kanchi temples and coeval temples elsewhere in the Pallava period" have been postulated; first, "when only the Somaskanda panel existed as the object of worship in the sanctum; subsequently, when there was a linga alone erected perhaps without even a bhadrapitha; . . . . and later when the pitha, by then usually circular, was added to it either by slipping it into the linga or by assembling the 'yonipita' in parts around the linga". The second stage, when the linga alone was set up, has been ascribed to the "late Rajasimha period and later Pallava Nandivarman phase".

This dating renders it possible for the linga, in however simple a form, having been originally installed in the Mamallapuram temples. But some scholars will not grant even this. They argue that every linga which is found today or which once existed is a later addition, and that the object of worship was the Somaskanda stele alone set up on the back wall or picked out in stucco and painted.

The absence of the "pranala" is not a decisive argument

in itself. The linga might not have received purificatory baths. Even if it had, could not the water have been removed by other means, as in portable vessels? It can be reasonably said that further evidence is necessary before it may be asserted that the linga was not originally worshipped in the Mamallapuram temples. No argument can be drawn from the "agamas" because at the time these temples were created they had not been systematised.

Cult in the Mamallapuram temples was also dependent on the body of beliefs and traditions which prevailed in the earlier centuries, of which the Sangam poems are our only evidence. It is clear that this corpus was as influential as the "agamas". The prominence given to the worship of Goddess Durga and the iconography of some other divinities like Lord Krishna prove that the beliefs of the Sangam age continued to be influential. The "bhatki" movement of Appar and Sambandar did not conflict with them.

"The most outstanding among the gods in the eyes of the people were the three-eyed (Siva), the palm-bannerer (Balarama), Tirumal and Muruga". Durga was the "presiding deity of victory in battle". Among Lord Vishnu's incarnations, there are references to Varaha, Narasimha, Trivikrama, Rama and Krishna. Krishna and Balarama were known as "Mayon" and "Valiyon" respectively. According to "Silappadhikaram", a post-Sangam work, Mayon is associated with Nappinnai, a gopi, together with Balarama. This is reflected in the bas relief of Lord Krishna in Brindavan. Near Krishna is a lady marked out from the others by her costume. She has been identified with Nappinnai

While Lord Siva and Lord Tirumal were worshipped in the Mamallapuram temples, it has been conjectured that the Arjuna ratha was consecrated to Indra because an image of him riding an elephant appears on the back wall.

The Anantasayi form of Lord Vishnu, to which "Silappadikaram" refers, is represented at Mamallapuram. Lord Krishna, who is to be found in the bas relief and in the sculpture of Kaliyamardhana on the Dharmaraja ratha, does not appear elsewhere in the rock art of the Pallavas or their contemporaries. Lord Rama does not appear at all, though the Sangam age knew of Him.

Some of the sculptures are of historic interest. On the second storey of the Dharmaraja ratha there is an image of Lord Nataraja, four armed and dancing on Apasmara. This is one of the earliest representations of the concept, well known in earlier Tamil literature, including "Silappadikaram". The same monument contains the earliest sculptural representation of Ardhanari. The first forms of Harihara are found in this ratha and also in the Adivaraha temple.

PART II

I

EARLY DAYS

Mamallapuram is older than its monuments. Its history dates from the beginnings of the Christian era, while its monuments, as suggested in this book, were created about the beginning of the eighth century A.D., in the reign of Narasimha II Pallava. These monuments which until Mamallapuram was developed as a tourist centre in our days, stood starkly in a wilderness of sand and sea in the last few centuries, arose in what was already a centre of pilgrimage and a port town.

The history of Mamallapuram is that of a port and a centre of piety which developed into a city under the Pallavas and remained one until after Vijayanagar rule ended. Mamallapuram then degenerated into a village, its monuments neglected and almost buried in sand, until the British, who settled down in Madras in 1640, restored it in the nineteenth century. The modern age has caught up with Mamallapuram so strangely that holiday makers threaten to descend on it in shoals and an atom power station has been built nearby.

Mamallapuram's history begins in a welter of scholarly speculations. It was one of the many harbours on the east coast from which flowed streams of emigrantion, culture and trade to scuth-east Asia. Mamallapuram itself is not mentioned as one of these harbours until about the eighth century A.D., when Tirumangai Alvar[1] says that at Kadalmallai, an earlier name of the site, ships rode at anchor "bent to the point of breaking, laden as they are with wealth, big trunked elephants, and gems of nine varieties in heaps". But there is evidence that Mamallapuram had been a port much earlier than the eighth century.

The British antiquarians who puzzled over the monuments in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries found that Mamallapuram had been a port. Charles Gubbins[2] wrote in 1853, "I have the authority of a commander of approved skill and well acquainted with these seas for saying that there are no physical features to prohibit the idea that Mavalipur may have been one of these ports. He answers my enquiries, There are no reefs off the Seven Pagodas; and the only danger in the vicinity is a small reef .... but so near shore (half mile) as not to create any alarms at the present day when its situation is perfectly ascertained".

Gubbins suggests that "a salt-marsh, bearing every appearance of having once formed part of the estuary", which ran "behind and south of the sculptured ridge for some distance inland" and which "debouches about half-way between Sadras and the Shore Pagoda", might have been the anchorage point. This would be rather like the branch of the Cauvery in Puhar where, excavations have shown, boats were tied to poles.

Indirect evidence consists of a statement in the "Periplus of the Erythraean Sea", a sailor's manual probably written in the first century A.D., and of a reference in the Sangam poem, "Perum-pan-arruppatai". The first testimony is inferential and the second a disputed one. But, despite these infirmities, the two together suggest the existence of a port at Kadalmallai or in its vicinity A hypothesis of a sea-front extending from Saluvankuppam to Sadras will meet the objections.

"Of the several branches of natural science that flourished in the Hellenistic and Roman world the revival of geography was one. Several works on Indian geography appeared describing the country with varying degrees of accuracy."[3] Four Roman geographers refer to the empire's vast trade with India in the centuries before and after Christ. Strabo (60 B. C. to 19 A.D) and Pliny the Elder (23 A.D. to 79 A.D.) do not

mention south Indian ports, but the author of the "Periplus" and Ptolemy, who wrote about 150 A.D., do.

Ptolemy is of little use for our purposes. "Between Khaberis emporion (Puhar) and the Ganges not a single place mentioned by Ptolemy could be identified with some certainty". The "Periplus" is more useful. Its author "had doubtless visited the seats of commerce on the west coast of India, and his account is invaluble for the the directness and accuracy that generally characterise it". He travelled "through India and left an eye witness account of the Red Sea and of the Arabian and Indian coasts".

His manual "contains the best account of the commerce carried on from the Red Sea and the coast of Africa wtth the East Indies during the time Egypt was a Roman province. It mentions river mouths, ports etc, with distances from one another, exports, imports and such other details as a merchant must most value". This work was probably written "about the middle or the second half" of the first century A.D. Some recent studies put the date about 300."

Barygaza, or Broach, was the principal Indian port in the period. South of Calliens (Kalyan, near Bombay), seven "market towns" and four islands, there followed Naura (Cannanore) and Tyndis (Ponnani), "the first markets of Damirica", or the Tamil country, and then Muziris (Crangnore) and Nelcynda a place near modern Kottayam, "which are now of leading importance". Muziris, the most prominent port in south India, "abounds in ships sent there with cargoes from Arabia and by the Greeks".

The manual adds, "They send large ships to these market towns on account of the great quantity and bulk of pepper and malabathrum. There are imported here, in the first place, a great quantity of coin; topaz, thin clothing, not much; figured linens, antimony, coral, crude glass, copper, tin, lead; wine, not much, but as much as at Barygaza; realgar and orpiment,

and wheat enough for the sailors, for this is not dealt in by merchants there. There is exported pepper which is produced in quantity in only one region near these markets, a district called Cottonara Besides this there are exported great quantities of fine pearls, ivory, silk cloth, spikenard from the Ganges, malabathrum from places in the interior, transparent stones of all kinds, diamonds and sapphtres and tortoise shell."[4]

Three kinds of ships sailed the seas. They were coastal vessels, "sangara" or large ships made of "single logs bound together" and "colandia" which made voyages to the Ganges and Malaysia. As, rounding the peninsula at Cape Comorin, the ships sailed up the eastern coast, they came to Cochi (Korkai) and the 'coast country' (the Chola kingdom). Then occurs the possible reference to Mamallapuram. "Among the market towns and harbours where the ships put in from Damirica and from the north (Bengal), the most important are, in order as they lie, first Camara, then Poduce, then Sopatma".

The identification of Camara and Poduce is no difficulty. They were Puhar and Arikkamedu respectively. Markanam was taken to be Sopatma[5] But, apart from the unlikelihood of another port within twenty miles of Arikkamedu, it is said that Tamil literary usage precludes the identification. It has been suggested that Sopatma was, in fact, Sadras. This suggestion is a plausible one and it confirms the existence of a port if not exactly at, then in the vicinity of Mamallapuram.

This must be considered in a broad sense. Modern harbours extend over a long distance along sea or river. Mamallapuram port must be taken to have extended "both along the coast and also in the interior" and may have been connected with Kanchipuram by the Palar, on the banks of tributaries of which Sadras and Kanchipuram stand.

The identification is governed in part by Huen tsang's

statement in the seventh century that Kanchipuram stood on the seacoast. His translators differ on the exact meaning of what he wrote.[6] One version is, 'The town of Kin-chi is situated on a port of the sea'. Another is, "The town of Kin-chi is the opening (mouth) of the southern sea of India, and in the direction of Sinhala the water journey is three days". The pilgrim adds that Kanchi extends to the sea by twenty miles and that ships voyage to Sri Lanka from Kanchi. He could scarcely have mistaken the Vegavathi for the sea, but it is reasonable to believe that he had heard from his friends that Kanchi was connected with the sea by a river. He was a Buddhist pilgrim, and he shows little interest in setting down geographical facts accurately. Nevertheless, the fact that he believed in Kanchi's close geographical association with the seacoast is significant. He would not have done so had there not been a port in the Mamallapuram region connected with the Pallava capital.

There are some possible clues to this port, one in Pallava times and the others earlier. At the temple in Vayalur there is the celebrated inscription of Rajasimha,[7] which sets forth the Pallava genealogy from mythical times to his own. Today the temple stands in an emptiness. But it is scarcely likely that the Pallava would have gone to the trouble of exhibiting his genealogy in a place which few people would visit. Vayalur must have been an important place at the time when Rajasimha caused the inscription to be engraved. In fact, there are indications that it was Vayalur that was the port of embarkation in these parts of travellers to the Chryse, (Malaysia) or the "apheterion", in Ptolemy's phrase.

Vayalur's old name, as sent forth in inscriptions, was "Tiruppilavayil"[8] meaning "passage to the nether world" or the "world of the Nagas". It is in this sense that Nachchinakkiniyar uses this expression with reference to Negapatam. South-east Asia is the land of the Nagas in early Tamil literature Evidently, Vayalur was an important port for journeys to

Malaysia and other south-eastern countries. The Vayalur inscription adds for good measure that Rajasimha was ruling the islands of the Lakshadweepa, a significant statement in the context.

Vayalur, near the mouth of the Palar, lies eleven miles south of Mamallapuram and three south of Sadras In its vicinity, in the village of Paramesvaramangalam, Pallava artifacts have been discovered. The significance cannot be missed.

But an even stronger argument remains. An important Sangam poem, "Perum-pan-arruppatai", refers to a place called Nirppeyarru[9] on the coast near Kanchipuram. The poem contains vignettes of life in this village. "Its grand shore was surrounded by ships which brought horses white like milk, with waving manes, from the west, and the products of the north. In the streets covered with sand there were warehouses guarded by servants. There were also stately mansions in which merchants lived." There was a light-house in the port. Journeying by this village and many others, the interlocutor of the poem reached Tiruvekha, now a suburb of Kanchi, where there was a temple dedicated to Lord Anantasayana, the earliest to enshrine this form of the Lord that Tamil literature knows of.

The identification of Nirppeyarru with Kadalmallai has been proposed. But it has also been opposed. The objections may be valid to the extent that exactly and precisely Kadalmallai was not Nirppeyarru. But if it could be identified with Sadras the argument would hold good. We are to conceive a huge port which extended from Saluvankuppam to the mouth of the Palar, some fifteen miles long. A modern analogy would be London or Antwerp. It is reasonable to postulate a number of embarking and landing places along the stretch of coast which should include Saluvankuppam, Mamallapuram, Sadras, Vasavasamudram, Tiruppilavayil, and perhaps other

sites which excavations may reveal

One of Ptolemy's names for a port in this part of the coast is Malange. Some scholars identify this with Mamallapuram, but the weight of evidence is against it. Ptolemy locates Malange in the Aruvarnai, between Poduke and the Palar river. It was the capital or the port of a petty ruler, Nalliyakkodan, whose kingdom lay between the Palar and the Pennar. This takes it out of the geographical location of Sadras or Mamallapuram. Further, Ptolemy mentions Maliarpha as another port. This is identified with Mylapore. It is untikely that there could have been two important ports within thirty miles of each other.

The find of Roman and Chinese coins in and near Mamallapuram testifies to the existence of a port. Two Pallava coins discovered in Mamallapuram bear legends read as "Sribhara" and "Srinidhi", two of the honorifics found on the Dharmaraja ratha.

The evidence of religious literature is conclusive that Mamallapuram, under an earlier name, was an important centre of pilgrimage in addition to being a port. Two of the Alvars have sung of its sanctity. The earlier is Bhutam, who is assigned to the second century A.D. There is much controversy about when the Alvars lived, but Bhutam was the second in time, after Poigai. He was born in Kadalmallai. There is a verse in his "Tiruvandadi" which makes a specific reference to Mamallai Another verse of his describes the Lord as reclining on bare earth.[10]

The second Alvar associated with Mamallapuram. Tirumangai[11] bears testimony to the importance of the port in the eighth century. Twenty-six of his verses are devoted to this pilgrimage centre, six of them indirectly. The first decad of his "Peria Tirumozhi" describes the beauty and achievements of the Lord. Each verse ends with the refrain, "I have

seen him in Talasayanam in Mallai on the sea". The second decad praises those who worship at this place and are devoted to its presiding Deity.[12]

That Mamallapuram is an ancient centre of piety is hardly surprising. Its temple had innimerable contemporaries. The Sangam poems refer to the existence of temples at Tirupparakunram near Madurai, and at Tiruvekha. The Saiva and Vaishnava hymners speak of a large number of temples in their time. In Kanchi alone, to choose that metropolis because of its relevance to Mamallapuram, Sambandar refers to Tirukachchi Ekambam and Narikaraikkadu (now called Tirukkalesvara, near Veppangulam), Appar to Merrali, and Sundarar to Anaekatangavadam and Onkandanrali (now Onkantesvara).

The Alvars speak of fourteen temples in Kanchi. The Paramesvaravinnagar is the Vaikunta Perumal, built after Mamallapuram. But Tiruppadagam, now Pandava Perumal, must in its origins be very ancient since it is referred to by two of the early Alvars Bhutam and Pey. Attabuyagaram, or Ashtabhujam (one is reminded of the Asthabhujaswami temple at Nagarjunakonda, the foundations of which were excavated some years ago) was where Vairamegan, the king of the Tondaiyars, or Pallavas, worshipped the Lord Attiyur is the Hasthigiri, the nucleus of the Sri Varada temple. Two other ancient temples in this list are Vellukkai now called Mukundanayaka, referred to by Pey, and Tiruvekha, one of the oldest temples in Kanchi to survive because "Perum-panarruppatai' mentions it.

The eight other temples are Tiruttanka or Vilakkolli Perumal, Uragam or the present Ulagalanda Perumal, Nirgam, now called Jagannadha Perumal, Niltingaltundam, Karagam, now known as Karunakara Perumal, Karvanam, Varaha Perumal and Pavahavannar. The Mamallapuram temple which enshrined the image of Lord Anantasayana to which Bhutam Alvar refers was coeval with these temples.

Mamallapuram has a "sthalapurana" devoted to it.[13] This appears in the "Mallapurimahatmya" in the "Kshetrakanda" of the "Brahmanda Purana". Once, so the story goes, Narada became much disturbed in mind. He decided to perform penance in Meri in order to recover peace The other sages there asked him to go to a place called Brahmasrama. There for a hundred years he offered severe penance. But this did not avail. So he sought advice from Brahma his father.

Brahma bade him recall any probable reason for his loss of mental peace. Narada remembered that he had once denied Lord Vishnu's accessibility ("saulabhyam") and had maintained His inaccessibility ("paratvam"). Brahma then recalled to Narada a discussion on this topic between Agastya and Suta once This includes the answers Lord Siva had given to Goddess Parvati's questions on Lord Vishnu's attributes. Lord Siva related the story of the sage Pundarika.

Pundarika once went to Yadugiri, or Melkote, to worship Lord Vishnu. He came to Tiruvadandai after visiting many other sacred centres on the east coast. He travelled south and saw a beautiful garden in which there was a pond with wonderful lotuses As he was gathering them, he heard an aerial voice say that those lotuses, each with a thousand petals, coloured golden, and of delightful perfume, should be used only in the worship of the Lord who dwells in the Sea of Milk, and of no other Deity.

The sage was gathering the flowers when a crocodile made to attack him But it mistook a lotus stalk for his leg, was wounded and lay as dead in the water. As Pundarika went near it, the crocodile told him that in a former birth it had been the king of the whole earth and had dwelt at Mallapuri. After describing the glory and grandeur of Mallapuri it said that its son, Satananda, a devotee of Lord Vishnu, was "famed in three worlds" and was named Mallesvara.

The crocodile then told Pundarika that Lord Varaha once came to Mallapuri. Formerly there had lived a good king by name Harisekhara. (In the first Indian description in modern times of Mamallapuram, written in the nineteenth century, the sculptured king on the southern wall of the Adivaraha temple is identified as Harisekhara). He used to go daily to Tiruvadandai with his aged mother to worship the Lord and feed Brahmins. One day Lord Hari, disguised as an old Brahmin, and accompanied by His daughter, came to Mallapuri and asked for food. The king asked him to wait. But the old man demanded to be given food immediately as he was very tired and his daughter was hungry. The king, coming to believe that the old man was Lord Vishnu in disguise, offered him worship and gave him food. He then saw Lord Varaha in His proper form.

The Brahmins who had come to be fed suddenly felt replete. They requested the Lord to remain always at Mallapuri and He agreed. They asked him why He looked westwards. He replied that it was because the Punyakoti Vimana (the main shrine in the Sri Varada temple at Kanchipuram) was to come up in the west at a distance of five "yojanas".

The crocodile, whose real name was Haripriya, then related how it had come to be cursed. When, one day, a Brahmin asked him for food, he treated him with contempt, and was cursed to become a crocodile. He was told, however, that the curse would be removed when he met a worshipper of Lord Vishnu. This having now come to pass, he was transformed into a youth of sixteen years and went to heaven.

Pundarika, thereupon, carrying garlands of lotuses, set out to worship Lord Vishnu on the Sea of Milk Arriving on the shores of the Salt Sea, he attempted to bale out the water so that he could proceed on his way. He did this for a year, but gave up the attempt, having become weary.

An old Brahmin then came to him and asked him what he was doing. Pundarika told him. The Brahmin then advised him to give up his attempt. Angered at this, Pundarika said that the Brahmin should either help him or go about his business. Thereupon the old man set to work, baling out the sea. At his first attempt the sea receded a little. When Pundarika, who had in the meantime gone to fetch food, returned and saw what had happened, he realised that the old man was none other then Lord Vishnu. The old man was now reclining on the shore with a lotus garland round his neck, and facing east. Pundarika worshipped him as Talasayana.

Lord Vishnu asked the sage to request a boon of him. Pundarika said that, after having obtained vision of Lord Vishnu, he wished for nothing else. He only begged that the Lord would remain in that place. The Lord agreed.

Lord Brahma came to the seashore with hosts of demi-gods. They all praised Lord Vishnu for His accessibility Soon after there came to them King Satananda with the people of the city. They asked the Lord under what name He would dwell among them. He replied, "Know me as Talasayi, who here reclines on the ground".

Afterwards a vimana, called "Anandanilayam", with seven pinnacles and containing a shining image, descended from Vaikunta. Around it the king built walls with a "gopura".

Such was the story that Suta told. Agastya accepted his arguments and set out for Mallapuri. He came to a great mountain called Samvartana. He heard a sound above and saw some of Yama's soldiers dragging away a Brahmin. But some of Lord Vishnu's soldiers rescued the Brahmin. The two groups of soldiers fell disputing. Yama's servants said that the Brahmin had committed great sins. Lord Vishnu's soldiers replied that, as he had spent a day at Mallapuri, all his sins had been washed away.

Marvelling, Agastya continued on his journey to Mallapuri and came to a dense forest, where he saw six virgins performing penance. They told him that they were the Ganga transformed by a curse into six bodies. The Ganga had once heard sages on the Himavat mountain, discussing the relative merits of the " tirthas ", say that, while the Ganga and the Cauvery should be praised, the Pundarika pond at Mallapuri was the most excell-cent of all and that the Ganga and the other rivers should be its slaves. Saddened at this, the Ganga had wandered about and met Shanmukha. He said that she had no just cause for jealousy, for, great as she was, the Pundarika pond was far superior. He added that she would be freed of her curse if she bathed in the pond and also performed penance. The latter she was now doing

When Agastya came to Mallapuri, he found a host of sages around the temple of Talasayana, also called "Ananda-nilayam" He requested that he be allowed to live with them without offering prayers or performing penance because Lord Vishnu would be satisfied with simple worship. They agreed. Agastya bathed in the Pundarika pond and came to the temple. There he saw Lord Talasayana reclining with His head resting on His right hand. The Lord received Agastya kindly and directed him to worship Him daily. He appointed him a hermitage named Asvatha on the north side of the Pundarika pond

The Lord told Agastya how Garuda had once lost and then recovered his wings. One day the Lord called Garuda to carry him to Svarga The bird arrived so fast that the dust he raised fell on a worshipper at his ablutions. The Lord, angered at this, caused Garuda's wings to fall away. The bird fell into a forest on the shores of the western sea. He bathed in many a "kshetra" hoping that his wings would grow again. But not until he came to Mallapuri could he recover them.

Lord Vishnu then told Agastya that those were dear to him who loved those that loved Him. (This is the main theme of the second decad of Tirumangai Alvar's "Peria Tirumozhi", which praises those who worship the Deity of Kadanmallai). Agastya took up his abode in Mallapuri.

Brahma concluded, "Therefore, O Narada, know Vishnu to be an ocean of accessibility. By Him, without doubt. thy mind will become clear. His understanding will not be confused who, in this world, knows Lakshmisa as an ocean of accessibility to His votaries. Even at the destruction of this world, he will suffer no pain. Therefore, having gone there, bathed in the holy pond, and worshipped Talasayi thou shalt obtain purity of mind". Narada then went to Mallapuri and obtained all his desires.

There is nothing in this story for the historian. But "sthalapuranas" do serve a purpose. The name, "Ananda-nilayam", seems to have been given to the temple of Lord Talasayana. There is no reference to any of the excavated temples. but attempts are made to link Kanchipuram and Tiruvadandai with Mamallapuram's sanctity. From the fact that the main shrine of the Sri Varada temple at Kanchipuram is mentioned by its name of "Punyakoti Vimanam" it may be deduced that this part of the "purana" was written about the early middle ages. "Authorities seem to agree that a long period of time must be assigned to the composition of this body of literature (the "Puranas"). During this period the texts grew through the addition of more religious materials. However, none of the "Puranas" goes back earlier than the Gupta period. Some authorities have postulated two distinct stages in the development of the extant "Puranas". The first stage in which the 'Puranas" contained ancient materials, including parts of the epics, is dated from the third through the fifth centuries A.D. The second stage, sixth century onward, was the one in which topics like the giving of gifts, tirthas, rituals of worship and the like were incorporated".

The importance of Mamallapuram in the Chola empire and in subsequent times led to a neighbouring centre claiming some kind of relationship with it. The nearest town of importance today is Tirukkazhukunram. In the later middle ages Sadras might have disputed its primacy. The "sthalapurana" of the Bhaktavatsala temple at the foot of the hill at Tirukkazhukunram claims a close connection with Mamallapuram.

The story is that Suraguru, a Chola king reigning at Mamallapuram, built the Bhaktavatsala temple. When one day he was hunting in the forests near the Vedagiri, the main hill at Tirukkazhukunram, he killed a porcupine. From the dead animal there emerged a Rakshasa who said that he had been cursed by sage Markandeya into that animal form and that he was delivered by Suraguru.

The king continued hunting and by mistake he happened to kill a cow. In remorse he was preparing to throw himself under the wheels of his chariot, a form of punishment indicated in the story of Manuneedhi Chola, when a beautiful damsel appeared from out of the cow's body. She said that the king had committed no sin, but that he was now the cause of her deliverance from a curse. She was Tilottama and she had once angered Nandideva who had laid the curse on her.

This incident was followed by yet another. A dog belonging to Suraguru's minister jumped into a tank nearby and emerged with its leprous sores cured. Thereupon the minister, who was also suffering from leprosy, bathed in the tank and he too was cured.

The "sthalapurana" states that Suraguru built many houses near Tirukakazhukunram. Two mounds in the vicinity are said to be the sites of his camps.

On the pillars of the mandapa in the second prakara of the Bhaktavatsala temple are relief figures which illustrate the

"sthalapurana". Suraguru is depicted in the attitude of prayer. He wears a kind of sloping head-dress. He stands with his left foot somewhat askew. In another sculpture he is shooting an arrow while hunting. By his side is a figure brandishing a sword. The Rakshasa and Tillottama emerge from the dead boar and cow side by side in another sculpture. There is a relief of a cow ringing the bell of complaints in front of the Chola palace at Tiruvarur in the well known story. This is in relation to Suraguru's decision to throw himself under the wheels of his chariot in punishment for having killed a cow.

There is an excellent sculpture of a ratha with apparently Suraguru seated in it. Also depicted are the king's elephants and camels as they set out to hunt. The sculptures resemble in style those in the horse court in the first prakara.

The "sthalapurana" must have been written before the mandapa which illustrates it was erected. This mandapa and the horse court were added to the original temple which was built in the thirteenth century. Their style is indisputably later. Mamallapuram remained important enough in the fifteenth century or thereabouts for the hagiographers of a neighbouring centre of pilgrimage to wish to form a connection with it. This is the only historical significance of the Tirukkazhukunram "sthalapurana", though Surguru is mentioned in "Kalinagattupparani". This town was, of course, important by itself in Chola times. An inscription in the Bhaktavasala temple calls it "Ulaganda Cholapuram".

While the innumerable Pallava voyages of religion, culture and trade to south-east Asia from the Coromandal ports, of which Kadalmallai was certainly one, have to be deduced from the permeation of Hinduism and Pallava art in those countries, and are not recorded in any Indian source of information, there is a historical reference to two Pallava naval expeditions to Sri Lanka.

The Kasakkudi plates of Nandivarman Pallavamalla in the eighth century say that Mamalla, like Sri Rama, captured Sri Lanka. This is confirmed by the national chronicles of the island.[14]

In the reign of Aggabodhi II, "the king of Kalinga, horrified by war, fled to Ceylon and became a monk; he seems to have been driven from his country by the Chalukya king Pulakesin II possibly about AD.609" A little later Manavarma the son of Kassapa II, following a quarrel in the royal family, left the kingdom with his wife to "live for a time in retirement in the Uttaradesa". When discovered there, they took refuge at the court of Narasimha I in Kanchi. Manavarma sought the Pallava's help in recovering his kingdom from the reigning king, Dathopatissa II, probably an usurping uncle of his.

Manavarma became great friends with Narasimha. The "Culavamsa" describes their amity at length. Two instances are given, one rather novel. It is said that when one day the two friends were travelling on elephants they came to a place where they drank the milk of a coconut. The Pallava drained a part of the coconut and, without realising what he was doing, handed over what remained to Manavarma. The latter drank it off out with feeling offended. The Pallava then realised that he had committed a breach of etiquette. The incident made him more attached than ever to his guest.

On another occasion, a more momentous one, Narasimha setting out to meet a Chalukyan invasion, left Manavarma behind in Kanchi. After a time Manavarma hurried from the capital to the battle-field in order to help his friend. The foe was the aggressor who had expelled the king of Kalinga.

Narasimha fitted out a naval expedition to Sri Lanka to help Manavarma recover his throne. It must have set out from Mamallapuram. This expedition failed, for soon after it landed

in the island news came that the Pallava king had fallen ill and the soldiers returned home. A second expedition sailed soon after, again almost certainly from Mamallapuram. According to one source, Narasimha accompanied it. According to another, he only pretended to do so in order to inspirit his army. It is said that his soldiers would not go on board the transports unless the king too came. A stratagem was used. Royal instruments were sounded from a ship and the army, thinking that Narasimha was on board, embarked.

This expedition was successful. With its help Manavarma captured Anuradhapura and established his rule there. The later events, when he had again to flee his country and sought refuge in Kanchi, do not belong to Mamallapuram's history.

II

UNDER PALLAVAS AND CHOLAS

By the eighth century Mamallapuram had become not only a port and a centre of pilgrimage but also an important city in the Pallava kingdom. "Avantisundarikatha", a Sanskrit prose work, with a poetic introduction, and "Avanthisundarikathasara", a summary in verse of the former,[15] testify to this fact. These two works are important for the history of Mamallapuram. The history they contain is enmeshed in a great deal of romancing, but what they have to say of contemporary events, though in fictional guise, is valuable.

A friend of Kubja Vishnuvardhana, later the founder of the Vengi Chalukyan kingdom, but at this time Yuvaraja in Vatapi, and of Bharavi, was one Damodara, son of Narayana, who had migrated from Anandapura to Achalapura, modern Elichpore. Damodara used to accompany Vishnuvardhana when the latter went hunting. During one of these expeditions he had to eat meat. To expiate the sin he a Brahmin had thus committed, he set out on a pilgrimage. He was then twenty years old He happened to meet Yuvaraja Durvinita of the Western Ganga dynasty who had been exiled by his father Durvinita was by way of a scholar. He is believed to have written a commentary on the fifteenth "sarga" of Bharav'is "Kiratarjuniyam".

According to "Avanthisundarikathasara", one day there came to the court of Simhavishnu, the Pallava king, at Kanchipuram, a Gandharva, who sang a song to the accompaniment of the lute Much pleased with the song, the king asked who had written it. He was told that it was Damodara, "whom the poetic muse marked for her own even in his youth". Damodara was then at the Ganga court. Simhavishnu invited him to Kanchipuram. The young poet settled down in the Pallava

capital, treated by the king like a son. There he wrote many works.

Damodara's great-grandson was Dandin. Dandin lost his mother when he was seven years old. "Afterwards he was nurtured by the Goddess of Learning". His father died soon after. The Pallava kingdom was invaded by enemies. "Famine and pestilence devastated the land of the Dravidas, Cholas and Pandyas". Dandin left Kanchipuram and visited several other centres of learning, returning home when peace was restored.

One day an artist, Lalitalaya, called on Dandin. Lalitalaya was a remarkable individual. He could construct ninety-six kinds of temples and six modes of mechanical contrivances. He made 'mechanical men and exhibited a mock fight between them". He caused artificial rain to fall. He "showed magic" through mechanical devices. Also a soldier, he could break the heads of elephants in battle with arrows "as big as pestles". He was an author too, having written a life of Sudraka in Tamil. Lalitalaya's father had been superior to the Yavanas[16] in making artificial devices and he had astonished King Durjaya by creating a mechanical "wish yielding tree".

We should consider father and son remarkable men, but it was Lalitalaya's lament that "our great achievements in art have deteriorated by long neglect". If this statement is taken at its face value, religious art in the Tamil region before the eighth century must have been much advanced and of superlative beauty, of which the Pandava rathas at Mamallapuram have captured but a glimpse.

Lalitalaya told Dandin that he had repaired one of the arms of an image of Lord Vishnu at Mamallapuram, called Mahamallapuram in the book, and requested him to judge whether the repair was "worthy of the image which is a work of the great ancient architects". Dandin agreed. With some

friends, two of whom were Ranamalla or Virapataka and Jayantanarayana, he travelled to the port city the next day. Did they perhaps take a boat along the canal which, according to some scholars, linked the port with the capital? They were joined at Mamallapuram by Maradatta and Devasarman, both from Kerala.

"On the shore they saw a lofty palace, all in white, the tumultuous billows dashing against its base". They beheld the image, "the sea brushing its feet with gentle ripples". They could discover no sign of mending in any of the arms and asked Lalitalaya which of them he had repaired. He "bowed to them and said that his labours were amply rewarded". They then saw a big red lotus "moving slowly towards the image". This marks the beginning of the story of Rajavahana.

Though neither "Avantisundarkatha" nor its summary is a work of history, they do refer to at least three historical personages, Kubja Vishnuvardhana, Durvinita Ganga and Simhavishnu Pallava. This suggests that they contain a substratum of history. They certainly reflect the cultural ethos of the times

There are two images of Lord Anantasayi in Mamallapuram, or rather one, the other, in the Mahisamardhani temple, being a panel of sculpture. The image which Lalitalaya repaired and Dandin saw must have been that which is now in the central shrine of the Shore Temple.

The Chittoor plates of Nrpatunga[17] assert that Narasimha I built a temple near the sea for "the one who possesses the mighty discus to recline in". The context does not indicate that this temple was in Mamallapuram, but since it is the only one in such a dramatic location known to us it may be taken to be the shrine now part of the Shore Temple.

Rajasimha made Mamallapuram pulsate with religious and artistic life. But it continued to be an important port. Most probably it was from Mamallapuram that Rajasimha sent an embassy to China relating to his wars against the Tibetans and the Arabs Notices of embassies sent by Indian kings in the last years of the seventh century and the beginnings of the eighth, as collected from a Chinese encyclopaedia of the eleventh century,[18] speak of one despatched in 720 by Rajasimha to announce to the Chinese emperor his intention to go to war with the Arabs and the Tibetans. "In the eighth year of K'ai zuen (720) the king of the kingdom of South India, Che-li Na-lo-seng-kia (Sri Narasimha) proposed to employ his war elephants and his cavalry to chastise the Ta-che (Arab) as well as the T'ou-po (Tibetans) and others". Rajasimha is also reported to have made a request scarcely in keeping with this high diplomacy. He asked that a name be given to his army. The Chinese emperor praised the army "greatly and named it 'the army which cherished virtue".

In the same year of 720 three events pertaining to the Pallava kingdom occurred, according to the Chinese encyclopaedia. In the eighth month the Chinese emperor issued a decree that, since the ambassador of the king of South India was about to return home, the Chinese chamberlain "must look after him with the greatest care till his departure in such a way that his desires might be fulfilled. This ambassador was, therefore, given a robe of flowered silk, a golden girdle, a purse (or a bag) with an emblem in the form of a fish, and the seven objects; then he was sent away".

In the next, or ninth, month the king of South India "constructed a temple on account of the empire (China). He addressed to the emperar a request asking from him an inscription giving a name to this temple. By decree it was decided that the name should be, "that which causes return to virtue", and it was presented to him".

In the eleventh month the Chinese emperor sent an ambassador to "confer by brevet the title of king of the kingdom of South India" on Rajasimha.

It has been conjectured that Vajrabodhi,[19] the famous Buddhist monk, accompanied Rajasimha's ambassador to the Chinese court. Vajrabodhi arrived at the eastern capital of China in the same eventful year of 720. It is reasonable to suppose that these embassies departed from, and returned to, Mamallapuram. This is the last we hear of Mamallapuram in the reign of the king but for whom it would be unknown.

Pallavamalla. who succeeded Paramesvara II under very difficult circumstances, battled hard most of his reign to preserve the kingdom from its enemies. Towards the end of his long rule he restored peace and order and, characteristically of the Pallavas, built a temple, the Vaikunta Perumal. An epigraph in the Adivaraha temple records a commercial transaction in his very last year. A local notability buys for gold a piece of grazing land from what would nowadays be called a chamber of commerce in Mamallapuram. The inscription names two lakes in the port city, one of which is the Koneri. A highway is also mentioned.

Pallava rule is drawing to a close. It ends at Mamallapuram on a note of poetry, devotional and secular. Tirumangai Alvar was a contemporary of Nandivarman III, the grandson of Pallavamalla. Nandivarman III was an energetic ruler who endeavoured to stave off the coming Pallava collapse. To his reign belongs the one solitary glimpse available of all the vast process which made much of south-eastern Asia an India beyond the seas Merchants and emigrants from the Pallava kingdom built a temple to Lord Vishnu and a tank in what is now Thailand, trying to recreate an India under an alien sky. They named the tank after an honorific of Nandivarman's.[20]

The secular poem, "Nandikalambagam", written by

Perundevanar, calls Nandivarman the warden of Mallai, the king of Mallai. The poem explores the literary convention of imagining a noble lady in love with the king and describing her love-lorn torments. As the high born damsel of Mamallapuram and a confidante of hers are standing in a copse, a mad elephant rushes at them. They are saved by Nandivarman who, appearing opportunely bow in hand, sends the elephant scurrying away. There is a furore. Is it caused by the elephant or is it the people of Mamallapuram welcoming their king?

Another verse evokes a scene on the seashore. It is night and a cold wind blows from the sea. The noble lady, chilled, sits under trees, the sea breeze accentuating her love-lorn sleeplessness. She longs for Nandivarman to come to her.

A following song refers to Nandivarman's great victory at Tellaru. His love lives at Mamallapuram. Beautiful as a peacock is she. A bird nesting near the Mamallapuram coast is adjured to go to Nandivarman and tell him that his love is waiting for him It is on this tender note that the Pallava epoch ends at Mamallapuram.

The stricken field of Sripurambiyum, fought in 903, where Aparajita, as he rode to battle on an elephant, was killed by Aditya, the second of the restored Cholas, brought all Pallava land under the new dynasty. According to an inscription of the victor at Tirukkazhukunram, Puttan, son of Gunavan, was the "lord of the adjoining shore" at this time.

Mamallapuram flourished under the Cholas. It remained a commercial centre, and its sanctity developed. But it occurred to no Chola king or noble to complete the monuments. This could not have been because there was no money. There was plenty of it because a number of merchants lived there. But perhaps by this time the spirit of innovation, of variety, which had animated Rajasimha had disappeared. For that

matter, no successor of Pallavamalla, like Dantivarman and Nandivarman III, who were reasonably secure, undertook the task even in Pallava times.

The resurgent Chola power received a setback when Crown Prince Rajaditya, the heir of Parantaka I, lost the battle of Takkolam to Krishna III, the Rashtrakuta invader, in 949. For about a quarter of a century the Rashtrakutas were in occupation of northern Tondaimandalam with their headquarters at Melpadi. They seemed to have had every intention of permanently remaining in this area. But in the very nature of things their occupation could not last. The Rashtrakuta base in Manyakheta was too far away and, in fact, the dynasty had spent itself. In 973 Taila II captured the Rashtra kuta kingdom. The new dynasty, the Chalukyas of Kalyani, inherited the Rashtrakuta enmity to the Cholas, and the next century was to witness a titanic conflict between Chalakua and Chola. In the meanwhile, however, the Kalyani-Chalukyas did not interfere in the politics of the Tamil region even as the Cholas were recovering their strength for Rajaraja I and Rajendra I to become two of the greatest conquerors in the history of this land.

The Rashtrakuta occupation, brief though it was, was marked by benefactions to existing temples and building of new ones. Krishna III made gifts to the temples at Tirukkazhu kunram[21] and Tiruvadandai,[22] but to none at Mamallapuram nearby.

The half century during which Rajaraja I and his son created the Chola empire is one of the most brillant phases of history. The two made south India a factor in pan-Asian politics, conquering Sri Lanka and some of the countries of south-east Asia. Their patronage of religious art was magnificent and sustained. But the two emperors are represented by only five inscriptions at Mamallapuram.

Two epigraphs of Rajaraja occur in the Shore Temple and a third in the Atiranachanda temple The Saluvankuppam benefaction was of ninety-six sheep to maintain votive lamps in that temple. Saluvankuppam is called "Tiruveluchil" in this inscription.

On the Shore Temple one of the two Rajaraja epigraphs records a transaction between the Nagarattars, an organisation of the merchants of Mamallapuram, and the Perulamaiyar, an association of foreign traders living there. The transaction was ratified when a leading official of Amurkottam, the territorial division in which Mamallapuram was now included, was seated in a large flower garden south of the Shore Temple. This inscription mentions a taxation resurvey of Mamallapuram.

The second epigraph records a donation of nineteen gold "kalanju" coins by the same official to create a flower garden named after Rajaraja. The money was received into the temple treasury by the officiants of the three shrines. The boundaries of the proposed garden are indicated. One of them is the sea The names of the others, as well as date of the record, are lost, the inscription being damaged.

Two inscriptions of Rajendra I are found in the Adivaraha temple. The first, belonging to the ninth regnal year, records exemption of taxes on some land to provide for two services in the temple, which it names as that of Lord Paramesvara Mahavaraha Vishnu. It refers to two other temples at Mamallapuram, those of Mamallai Perumal and Uragamudaya Maha Vishnu. The first is probably the Adivaraha temple itself, to judge from an inscription of 1535, in the reign of Devaraya, the Vijayanagar emperor, which mentions "Mamallaiudaya Adivaraha". The second temple must be the Vishnu shrine in the Shore Temple.

This epigraph shows that Jananathapuram, called so after an honorific of Rajaraja I, was now another name for Mamalla-

puram; Jananathapuram in Amurnadu, in Amurkottam, in Jayankonda Cholamandalam. The scribe of this inscription was Tiruvezhichuladayan, obviously, a native of Saluvankuppam.

The second inscription of Rajendra in the Adivaraha temple records two gifts, one by the people of Saluvankuppam of land for services and the other by a notability of sheep to maintain a lamp. The portion of this inscription mentioning its date is damaged.

Some fifty years after Rajendra's first inscription, the local assembly of Sirudavur, or Narasimhamangalam, donated land to the Vishnu shrine in the Shore Temple. The Lord of this shrine is named Tirukkadalmallai Emperuman. In Rajaraja I's time the name had been Pallikonda Perumal This epigraph belongs to the reign of Virarajendra, who came to the throne in 1064.

The Mukunda Nayanar temple, itself carrying no inscription and until now not mentioned in any, comes into view at this stage Two gifts were made to it in the reign of Kulothunga I, both recorded in epigraphs parts of which were used in building the Gangaikondan mandapa in the nineteenth century. The first inscription dated either in second or the twelfth regnal year, records a gift of thirty-two cows to maintain a votive lamp in the temple. The second refers to purchase of land to be devoted to making food offerings at the early morning service in the temple of Thirumugalippamudaiyar at Mamallapuram, also called Jananathapuram. This temple is the Mukunda Nayanar.

There is a third inscription of the same reign on the same monument, but its operative portion is lost It is dated in the fourteenth regnal year and probably records a gift by the king, "who was pleased to sit on the throne of heroes, made of gold". A geographical name mentioned is "Amurnadu", a division of "Amur-kottam in Jayankonda-Chola-mandalam."

Chandesa, the first of the devotees of Lord Siva, is mentioned

- An epigraph in the Bhaktavatsala temple at Tirukkazhukunram, dated in the forty-second year of Kulothunga I, records the purchase by an inhabitant of Rajarajapuram of land near Mamallapuram to maintain a matha dedicated to Naminandi Adigal, a saint mentioned in "Periapuranam".

All the other Chola inscriptions that follow appear on, and record gifts to, the Talasyana Perumal temple. In the inscriptions this temple is called that of Talasayana, the Lord Ulaguyya Ninra Perumal, and the Goddess Nilamangai Nachiyar. It contains a shrine to Pundarika, the sage who figures prominently in the mythological account of Mamallapuram's sanctity. This represents an attempt to identify the Lord of this temple with the Lord of the central shrine in the Shore Temple.

In later times, a distinction was drawn between the mediaeval temple and the early shrine in the Shore Temple. The change seems to have occurred in Chola days, it is impossible to determine precisely when. It is difficult to say which of the temples is meant in the Chola inscriptions that refer to the Talasayana Perumal temple. The last Chola epigraph in the mediaeval temple belongs to the time of Vikrama Chola, the successor of Kulothunga I. It is a fragment. There is no doubt that the later inscriptions refer to the Talasayana Perumal temple. The Shore Temple drops out of epigraphical view.

Tamil literature of the Chola times refers to Mamallapuram in terms which show that it continued to be of importance. Karunakara Tondaiman, the General who fought the Kalinga wars for Kulothunga I, so graphically described in Jayankondar's poem, was a Pallava He, therefore, had an inalienable association with Mamallapuram. Accordingly the ghosts speak of Mallai, Kanchi and Mylai. In the reign of Kulothunga II, the author of Saivism's grand epic, "Peria-

puranam", refers to the site as "Madamallai". Later, Rajaraja II is called the Lord of Mallai, or "Mallapuresan", in Ottakuthar's poem on that king. This title is echoed in a Mamallapuram inscription of that doughty rebel, Kopperunjinga. He is called "Mallapuri Madhavan" and "Mallayarkon". Obviously, he had wrested the Mamallapuram region from the Cholas at least for a time.

Some Vaishnava devotional works of later times refer to the site. "Ayairappadi Guruparampara Prabhva" and "Nityasuri Charitam" note that Bhutam had been born at Mamallapuram. Periyavachan Pillai refers to the site in his commentary on the poems of Tirumangai.

The political uncertainty in the Mamallapuram region towards the end of Chola rule is reflected in the meagreness of inscriptions in the Pandya and Sambuvaraya hegemony that followed. In the thirteenth regnal year of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya, who succeeded to the throne in 1251, the village assembly of Payyanur, or Rajakesarichaturvedimangalam, provided for a special service to Kadalmallai Peruman for the welfare of the king. Sundara built the Bhaktavatsala temple at Tirukkazhukunram.

Of the brief Sambuvaraya rule there are four records, all in the reign of Rajanarayana, in his third, fifth and thirteenth (1353) regnal years. The first and third record gifts to the Talasayana Perumal temple. The second, in the Varaha temple, mentions a gift of land to perform a service to Lord Ulaguyya Ninra Perumal and Nilamangai Nachiar. Another of the same year records a gift to the same Lord. This is in the Talasayana Perumal temple.

Of the Vijayanagar epigraphs, issued in the reigns of Achutha, Virupaksha, Venkata III, and Sriranga III, one records that Emperor Venkata himself made a gift, the executor of which was Thirumalai Nayaka, who was his General in this region.

All the inscriptions provide for gifts to Lord Kadalmallai Talasayana Perumal to hold services and perform festivals. Mamallapuram was now in the province of Jayankondacholmandalam, and in the district of Padaiveedu.

It was in Venkata's reign that the English established themselves in Madras in 1639. This had indirect consequences for Mamallapuram.

III

EUROPEAN ERA BEGINS

The new chapter which opens in Mamallapuram's history in the seventeenth century begins on the sea. European traders were settling down at a number of places on the Coromandal coast in that century. In 1605 the Dutch came to Masulipatam, where the Portuguese had already settled down. The English followed in 1611. The Dutch had built a strong fort at Pulicat in 1606, and in 1639 arose the English settlement which was to become the metropolis of southern India. The French established themselves in Pondicherry in 1673. Half a century earlier, in 1620, the Danes had settled down in Tranquebar. Nearer Mamallapuram itself, the Dutch had made Sadras a prosperous centre of trade by the end of the seventeenth century.

Incidentally, many Dutch sailors and factors from Sadras have carved their names on the pillars of the Orukal mandapa at Tirukkazhukunram, just five miles west of Mamallapuram. Only one visit by a Dutchman to Mamallapuram itself has been recorded, that by M. J. Haafner between 1779 and 1781. His drawing of the Five Rathas is the first to be published of any Mamallapuram monument.

The foreigners carried on an extensive trade, their ships sailing not only to Europe but also to south-east Asia. There were also frequent wars among them; on sea as well as land. The Bay of Bengal, thus, became something like a European lake. This fact is important, for it was the foreign sailors who called Mamallapuram the Seven Pagodas, it is in a map that the first possible European reference to the site in this period occurs, and it was on board a ship passing by Mamallapuram that the earliest undoubted European reference originates.

The possible reference occurs in the Catalan atlas of

the world, the "Carta Catalana", of 1375. This atlas was drawn in Catalonia in Spain the cartographers of which in the first half of the fourteenth century "took over from the north Italians the lead in cartographic progress". Compiled by Abraham Cresques, it consists of "twelve leaves mounted on boards to fold like a screen; four are occupied by cosmographical and navigational data, the remaining eight forming the map". Cresques derived his information in part from the narratives of European travellers in Asia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, particularly Marco Polo. "The merit of the Catalan cartographers lay in the skill with which they employed the best contemporary sources to modify the traditional world picture, never proceeding more than the evidence warranted".

For the first time in mediaeval cartography, the Catalan map gives a "recognisable form" to Asia. For the first time too India's peninsular form is recognised. This was due to the information which Marco Polo had taken to Europe. The Catalan map drawers eagerly sought manuscripts of his travels, and there can be little doubt that they incorporated the information these contained.

The Asia map locates "Setemelti" at the place occupied by Mamallapuram. Colonel Henry Yule suggests in "Cathay and the Way Thither" that the expression is an error for "Sette Templi", Italian for "Seven Pagodas". There can be little doubt that he is right In the first place, the site is located correctly in relation to Mylapore, or Santhome Mylapore is called "Mirapore" in the map. Secondly, it may be reasonably deduced that "Setemelti" owes its presence in the map to information from Marco Polo.

Polo did not visit the Seven Pagodas, but he might have heard of it when he came to Mylapore. Many foreign travellers made the pilgrimage to Saint Thomas' tomb in Santhome, and Polo was one of them. He returned to Italy from his travels

in 1295 and he should have visited Santhome two or three years earlier. The date of 1290 may be accepted. Polo describes Santhome as "a certain little town having no great population. It is a place where few traders go because there is very little merchandise to be got there, and it is a place not very accessible. Both Christians and Saracens, however, greatly frequent it in pilgrimage".

Polo retails a number of fairy tales about life in south India at the time he visited it, and the story of "seven pagodas", possibly embellished with reports of some of them being submerged in the sea, could not but have appealed to him. He carried the tradition to Europe, and it was incorporated in the Catalan map, drawn fifty-one years after his death.

The Italian translation of the term, "Seven Pagodas", which is "Sette Templi", occurs in the first undoubted European reference to Mamallapuram About 3 p m on May 30, 1582, a ship passed by Mamallapuram on its way from Negapatam to Santhome. On board was a Venetian who looked out at the shore and thought that he saw "eight pleasant hillockes not very high", to quote the passage in Samuel Purchas English translation of his Italian text

Gasparo Balbi was a jeweller who had come east to trade. He arrived in India in 1579. He visited Diu and Goa before travelling to Sri Lanka. It was while coming to Santhome from the island. after a halt at Negapatam, that he passed by Mamallapuram. He could have seen nothing very distinct from the sea, and he must have heard of the "eight pleasant hillockes" either from the sailors or at Santhome. On the whole, however. he was a careful observer, noting "historical events, customs and traditions relating to various peoples, business information and geographical data of great importance".

Balbi adds that the monuments were created by the Chinese, "Sette Pagodi de' China". Some Chinese merchants

might have settled down on the Malabar coast in the late middle ages, particularly in Quilon, which appears as "Columbo" in the Catalan map, but there is no record of any on the Coramandal coast. The notion of Chinese influence, however, persisted among foreign visitors till later. In the next century Niccalao Manucci, who lived in Madras for many years, talks of the "sculptured fragments" of "Mavelivarao" resembling "Chinese".

The important point which emerges from this discussion is that Mamallapuram was known to foreigners as the Seven Pagodas even in the fourteenth century. But the name was current only among foreigners, and that too mostly among sailors. Neither Polo nor Balbi nor Manucci actually visited the site. The first European to do so, of whom there is record, was perhaps Alexander Hamilton, who was in Madras and Masulipatam in 1709

The name of "Seven Pagodas" must have arisen as a kind of passing fancy, made up by foreigners, and not very learned at that, who happened to sail past Mamallapuram. Had they landed and seen the monuments for themselves, they would have discarded the name. If by "pagodas" temples are meant, there are more than seven; if vimanas are meant there are less than seven. In any case, Balbi thought that there were eight and that they were "hillockes". It is futile to attempt to account for the number.

A whiff of war blows through Mamallapuram's history in the next event in the modern history of the site. In May 1601, a battle was fought at Uttramerur,[23] during a rebellion against Emperor Venkata II of Vijayanagar. Yachama Nayaka, of the Velugotti family, defeated Lingama Nayaka of Vellore, the rebel. Yachama had been set up in the fief of "Perumbedu sima" (Chingleput and Madurantakam taluks). So what one of the manuscripts in the Mackenzie collection[24] says, that Yachama and Singama (his younger brother) were then

living in "Mamallaipur", is worthy of credence. Obviously Mamallapuram continued to be a big town so that a magnate of the empire could take up his residence there. Another Mackenzie manuscript says that above the Ramanuja mandapa there was "Veligoti Singamanayani's mantapa". The association of this chief with the site is further proved by an inscription at Irugunrappalli[25] near Mamallapuram, which records in the year Durmati a gift for the merit of "Velikoti Singama Nayakkar Ayyan".

In 1607 or 1608, a book by a Spanish author[26] quotes from a letter which Emperor Venkata II is said to have written to the king of Spain. It says that "the fort (Taunapatam) is very convenient, the town large, and the population very mumerous scattered in the other ports and villages of that bay, for instance, Paliacate, Arimagan, Seven Pagodas, which are quite important ports".

The three other ports mentioned in this passage are respectively Devanampatnam, near Cuddalore, Pulicat and Armagon. Pulicat was the main centre of the Dutch on the east coast in the seventeenth century. The English stayed awhile at Armagon. They built Fort St. David at Devananpatnam. It figured in the wars of the eighteenth century. It is significant that Mamallapuram should have been considered an "important port" as late as the seventeenth century.

The site is called "Sevenpagoden" in a map appearing in a book published in 1672 and written by Philip Baldaeus, a Dutch clergyman, who had lived many years in south Asia. This book, translated into English with one of those long titles then customary, devotes considerable attention to the Dutch factories and forts on the east coast as well as to the local people. It does not refer to Mamallapuram.

Dr. John Fryer, a doctor of the English East India Company at Bombay, visited the east coast in 1673. He gives

an account of Sadras, "We descried a Town, in which a castle, overawing it, and upon the highest Pinnacle Dutch Colours which high Noon gave us to be Sandralspatam, a Factory of theirs". He adds that the soil there is "Fat and Opulent, like their Netherlands. The Water here ran smooth and discoloured".

Sadras, but again not nearby Mamallapuram, is described by another Dutchman, Francois Valentijn, whose book was published in Amsterdam in 1724-26. He says that Sadras was "no city, but only a large village" However it carried on a considerable trade in piecegoods and rice with Bantam After Sadras Valentijn proceeds to describe Pulicat

On the evening of September 22, 1673, a French clergyman, who was sailing from Madras to Bombay, found himself "opposite Chegpatam, about 12 leagues south of St. Thome". Abbe Carre mistook Mamallapuram for Chingleput.

Persons of consequence lived in Mamallapuram in 1682. Elihu Yale, then a member of the council at Fort St. George and later Governor, after whom the famous American university is named, sent a present to "Mahabalipur",[28] evidently to a personage living there. He must have been a member of the Velugotti family. Yale sent the present as a kind of preliminary to the visit he paid to Mamallapuram in January, 1682. The Madras Council resolved that Yale should go to Porto Novo to examine "what investment can be made and long cloth bought there" Mamallapuram lay on his route.

A consultation of the Madras Council runs, "Whereas there are several troubles and disturbances frequently attending the Company's affairs in this Countrey by the exactions and avarice of Lingappa, and inasmuch as Sumbojee, Sevagee's Son, is making great Preparations which 'tis thought may fall upon this Countrey…'tis thought convenient to make friendship with him and settle a Factory in his Countrey for a good

Correspondency between us···'tis therefore resolved and order'd that one of the Councell goe to Porto Novo". Yale's mission was successful. The English set up settlements at Porto Novo and Cuddalore, and built a factory at Kunimedu.

The eighteenth century opens at Mamallapuram with the tales of Signor Niccolao Manucci. This Venetian lived in Madras between 1686 and 1706 and perhaps again shortly before his death in 1717. He wrote in Madras an account of his experiences, "Storia do Mogor".[29] He was one of ihe European adventurers who swarmed in India at the time. He blithely asserts that the Chinese had once ruled the Deccan and that they had excavated Ellora and Kanheri.

Of a piece with this childish view is his statement on Mamallapuram which he regards as confirmation of his Chinese theory, "On the coast of Choramandal, near the sea, there is also a rock called Mavelivarao, distant four leagues from a place called Sadrasta patao (Sadras), where there are many sculptured fragments resembling Chinese".

Seven Pagodas enters the records of Fort St George Madras,[30] in 1708. An entry in the "Public Consultations", dated December 23, mentions a letter sent to the "Supra Gargoe or Comander of the English Ship riding near the Seven Pagodas'. Thomas Pitt was then President of Fort St George.

On November 17, 1721, Nathaniel Elwick, the President told his council that he had "received advice about noon from the Chief of Covelong, that a ship is drove about eight miles to the Southward of said place; and that 5 chests and 20 Europeans are come ashore and seized by the Moors".

The council decided to send a minor military expedition to recover the wreck. This consisted of "twenty Europeans and Captain Sutherland" to sail on the Heathcote together with ten lascars and ammunition, not to mention "sixty

spare arms for the Ship's Company, with all other necessaries and as many Mussoolas as can be spared, together with such as we can borrow from St. Thome".

On the same day the council "received a letter from the Chief of the Flemings at Covelong, advising that an English Ship was stranded at Mauvelipuram, and that the people that we sent down were arrived there; that the Moors at his intercession treated them very well; let them have two palankeens and a horse to go to the wreck and enquire news of the others that were missing; that they had secured all the sailors, but upon the Captain's request had released them again; and he assures us that the Moors will not in least hinder but rather be assisting to us in this affair".

There was a sequel to this six years later. In 1727 Charles Boddam, captain of the Charlton, who had been a resident of Madras in 1714, brought to Mamallapuram a "Copper diving Engine" together with a diver to investigate the wreck of the Dartmouth, the English ship which had been cast away in the storm six years previously. The diver, who examined the wreck; reported that the diving apparatus could not be used in the heavy surf. Boddam had brought the engine as a speculation.

Two French maps, produced in 1721 and 1723, indicate Mamallapuram. In the first year Fer, geographer to His Catholic Majesty. drew a map of southern and central India which shows the site marked, ungrammatically, "le 7 Pagodes". Below Pondicherry it indicates, this time with grammatical exactitude, "les 4 Pagodes" after the four "gopuras" of the Chidambaram temple.

"Les 7 Pagodes" appears on a map produced in 1723 by Guillaume de l'Isle and presented to the French king.

The first British visitor to Mamallapuram of whom there

is record was Captain Alexander Hamilton. Unlike most of his successors, he had a poor opinion of the art of the monuments. But he says in his book,[31] published in 1727, that "yearly pilgrimages" were made to Mamallapuram, which, therefore continued to be of importance.

War came very near Mamallapuram in 1741. That was the year the Mahrattas were besieging Chanda Sahib in Tiruchi, and the Europeans on the coast were apprehensive of their designs. Raghoji Bhonsle, the Mahratta commander in the Carnatic, made "extraordinary demands" upon Fort St. George and Fort St. David. The English in Madras waited anxiously for developments. They heard that a body of the Mahrattas had plundered Sadras and were encamped for a while on the "Sadras river", or the Palar.

Five years later warriors did come to Mamallapuram, but they passed through it. On September 10, 1746 Madras capitulated to the French after a siege.[32] The Nawab of the Carnatic, the sovereign of the region at the time, demanded that the French should hand Madras over to him. Dupleix temporised. The dispute led to the battle of the Adyar in November. Dupleix despatched from Pondicherry under Paradis a force of 230 Europeans and 700 trained sepoys to reinforce Depresmesnil, the French commander in Madras. This force marched by the coast road along Sadras and Covelong It must have passed through or by Mamallapuram.

A Frenchman who at the "order" of Louis XV travelled in the East Indies and China between 1774 and 1781, wrote of the site, "The temple named the Seven Pagodas, which one sees between Madras and Pondicherry, must be one of the oldest on the Coromandal coast because, having been built on the seacoast, the waves come upto its first stage. This is a phenomenon which we abandon to the researches of scientists". Evidently Sonnerat[33] was writing about what he had not himself seen But incidentally, he did see the fossils of

Tiruvakkarai near Pondicherry, of which he wrote a valuble account William Chambers who wrote an article on Mamallapuram in the first volume of "Asiatick Researches" in 1788 did so after visiting it twice. The first visit was in 1772. "Curiosity", he says, "led him thither again in 1776. His article is the first serious study of the subject, to be followed by a large number. Its full title is, "Some account of the Sculptures and Ruins at Mavalipuram, a place a few miles north of Sadras and known to seamen by the name of the Seven Pagodas".

Chambers was a minor figure in the recovery of Indian knowledge of which sir William Tones was the leader. The other in the group included Williams and Halhed. Chambers says that the site has "hitherto been little observed, though "situated in the neighbourhood of European settlements in the Coromandel coast". He is a sympathetic observer. As the hill "rises abruptly out of a level plain of great extent, consists chiefly of one single stone, and is situated very near to the sea-beach, it is such a kind of object as an inquisitive traveller would naturally turn aside to examine". Chambers thinks that Mamallapuram might be taken to be a "petrified town" because "works of imagery and sculpture crowd so thick upon the eye". He has some strange notions, for example, that the inscriptions are "Siamese".

From Chambers' time onwards discussions of four questions are to be looked for in articles or books that deal with Mamallapuram from a more or less scholarly point of view. They are the existence of a submerged city, justification for the name, "Seven Pagodas", identification of the great bas relief, who erected the monuments and when. On the third problem Chambers is cursory. He merely says, that the figures on the sculpture are "the most remarkable persons, whose actions are celebrated in the Mahabharit, each of them in an attitude, or with weapons, or other insignia, expressive of his character, or of some one of his most famous exploits".

But he postulates the other questions well. In fact, his account of the submerged city is the classic one.

The "natives of the place" told Chambers that "the more aged people among them remembered to have seen the tops of several Pagodas far out in the sea, which being covered with copper (probably gilt) were particularly visible at sunrise, as their shining surface used then to reflect the sun's rays, but that now that effect was no longer produced, as the copper had since become incrusted with mould and verdigris".

Many later writers repeat this story. Four years after Chambers' article was published, Quintin Crauford amplified the version, "Many of the ruins are now covered with water, and when it is calm may be seen under it". This appears in Crauford's book, "Sketches chiefly relating to the History, Religion, Learning and Manners of the Hindooes". The most famous version of the story appears in Southey's poem, "The Curse of Kehama", published in 1810. Chambers' article was in the poet's library. Henry Yule, the editor of Marco Polo, goes farther than his predecessors and asserts that "tradition runs in reference to the whole coast from San Thome to the Seven Pagodas, that extensive ruins exist beneath the sea and are some times visible".

It is certain that geographical features near the Mamallapuram coast have changed. The backwaters near the Pidari and Valayankutai rathas were the only ones of their kind in these parts before they were merged in the Buckingham Canal dug in the last century. The Palar flows into the sea some fifteen miles to the south. The old backwaters might have been something like a harbour basin, where ships anchored, at the time Mamallapuram was a port.

The Coromandal coast is certainly subject to tidal waves and severe storms in monsoon time. Investigations of Puhar, the ancient Chola port further south, show that some parts of

that city have gone under water. Ghantasala,[34] in Andhra, which was on the coast some eighteen centuries ago, is now about fifteen miles inland. But it is certain that the sea has not swallowed up any part of Mamallapuram, at least after the monuments, arose. This is proved by the unusual location of parts of the Shore Temple.

Had there been land to the east of this temple when it was built, the flagstaff and other ritual structures would not have been erected to the west of the complex, much behind the main shrine. If there had been any land between the sea and the eastern shrine, all these parts would have been set up in front of it. The whole point about the Shore Temple is that it is a temple on the shore.

Chambers' second problem is the appropriateness of the name of "Seven Pagodas". He links it with the tradition of the submerged city. "The rock, or rather hill of stone, on which a great part of these works are executed, is one of the principal marks for mariners as they approach the coast, and to them the place is known by the name of the Seven Pagodas, possibly because the summits of the rock have presented them with that idea as they passed; but it must be confessed that no aspect which the hill assumes, as viewed on the shore, seems at all to authorise this notion; and there are circumstances that would lead one to suspect that this name has arisen from some such number of Pagodas, that formerly stood here and in time have been buried in the waves".

The name was given by European sailors who could not have had any intimate knowledge of local conditions. It may have been based on a cursory notion as they sailed by Mamallapuram. It is, therefore, impossible to attempt to explain it scientifically. Later attempts to do so, all by European authors, vary widely.

One of these made as late as 1888, in the "Manual of

the Administration of the Madras Presidency", runs as follows; "The Seven Pagodas of Mauvellipooram, about 7 miles to the north of Sadras, are not descernible (to ships sailing off Mamallapuram) except when well in with the land. Two of them are near the sea, one of which, standing on a rock, is washed by it, and is now utterly destroyed, although this pagoda, it is said, formerly stood at a considerable distance, the sea having encroached greatly on the land. Four of them are in the valley near the foot of the south high land and the other on its extreme point. The view of those in the valley is often intercepted by the woods, particularly when they bear to the west".

In this view, the seven pagodas are the two towers of the Shore Temple and the five rathas. It is clearly an attempt to make up the number of seven somehow or other. All similar attempts are likewise factitious. As Lord Valentia, who visited the site in 1804, wrote in a book published seven years later, "No such number (of temples) exists there". Any further discussion is unprofitable.[35]

To a higher class of criticism belongs the tribute of William Robertson, the great historian, to the artistic attainments of Indians. In his book, "An Historical Disquisition Concerning the knowledge which the Ancients had of India", the first edition of which appeared in 1791, he says, "In proportion to the progress of the different countries of India in opulence and refinement, the structure of their temples gradually improved. From plain buildings they became highly finished stile there are Pagodas of great antiquity in different parts of Indostan, particularly in the southern provinces, which were not exposed to the destructive violence of Mahomedan zeal".

Robertson mentions some examples. One is "the entry to the Pagoda of Chillambrum near Porto Novo on the Coromandal coast, held in high veneration on account of its anti-

quity". Another is the "Pagoda of Seringham", which, "superior in sanctity to that of Chillambrum, surpasses it as much in grandeur". Robertson discusses some rock-cut temples like Elephanta, Salsette and "Ellore", and refers to the "remarkable excavations in a mountain at Mavalipuram near Sadras. This mountain is well known on the Coromandel coast by the name of the Seven Pagodas". He says that a "good description of the works there which are magnificent and of high antiquity" is given in Chambers' article.

Another scholarly study appeared in 1798. James Goldingham, who had written on Elephanta earlier, published a study of Mamallapuram, obviously on the basis of a visit. It contains some details of the condition of the village at that time. This, which "still retains the ancient name of Mahabalipuram", was "almost deserted".

"A distant view presents merely a rock which, on a near approach, is found deserving of particular examination". There was a "linga" in the Ganesa ratha, which Goldingham describes as "a Hindu pagoda, covered with sculpture, and hewn from a single mass of rock, being about twenty-six feet in height, nearly as long, and about half as broad". The "long inscription on the wall" is "in characters unknown".

"Arjuna's Penance" near by is "about ninety feet in extent, and thirty in height". It is "covered with figures in bas-relief. A gigantic figure of the god Krishna is the most conspicuous, with Arjoon, his favourite, in the Hindu attitude of prayer; but so void of flesh, as to present more the appearance of a skeleton than the representation of a living person. Below is a venerable figure, said to be the father of Arjoon; both figures proving the sculptor possessed no inconsiderable skill". Goldingham adds; "This scene, I understand, is taken from the Mahabharata, and exhibits the principal persons whose actions are celebrated in that work".

In the vicinity of "Arjuna's Penance", Goldingham notes "pagodas of brick, said to be of great antiquity" and "surrounded by a wall of stone". The Panchapandava temple is "an excavation in the rock, the massy roof seemingly supported by columns, not unlike those in the celebrated cavern in the Island of Elephanta, but have been left unfinished. This was probably intended as a place of worship".

"A more spacious excavation now used, and I suppose originally intended as a shelter for travellers", is the Krishna mandapa. "A scene of sculpture fronts the entrance, said to represent Krishna attending the herds of Ananda . . . . The columns supporting the roof are of different orders; the base of one is the figure of a Sphynx".

Goldingham finds that "the figure and action of the goddess" in the Mahishasuramardhani panel in the temple of that name is "executed in a masterly and spirited style". The Olakkanesvara temple above is "wrought from a single mass of stone". It is, of course, a structural temple.

In the Five Rathas Goldingham is impressed by the rent in the Bhima ratha. "No account is preserved of the powerful cause which produced this destructive effect".

The submerged city appears in Goldingham's account in connection with the Shore Temple. "East of the village, and washed by the sea, which, perhaps, would have entirely demolished it before now but for a defence of large stones in front is a pagoda of stone, containing the lingam, and dedicated to Siva. Besides the usual figures within, one of a gigantic stature is observed stretched out on the ground, and represented as secured in that position"

Goldingham was told by his guides that "the surf here breaks far out over the ruins in the city, which was incredibly large and magnificent. Many of the massess of stone near the shore appear to have been wrought".

A native of Mamallapuram, "about fifty years of age, whom I have had the opportunity of conversing with since my arrival at Madras", told Goldingham that "his grandfather had frequently mentioned having seen the gilt tops of five pagodas in the surf no longer visible".

IV

More Visitors

Goldingham's was the last record in the eighteenth century if a map, published by Laurie and Whittle in London in 1794, which calls the site "Miah-balipuram or Mauvelivaram i.e. the Seven Pagodas", is excepted. This map is called "A new map of the Jaghir lands, the coast of Coromandel or the Territory belonging to the east India company round Madras, from an Actual Survey in the Possession of the Company".

The first entry of the new century is a piece of gush. In a book[36] published in London in 1800 with a portentous title, Fra Paolino da San Bartholomeo breaks out into an uncritical rhapsody, "But how shall I describe this master-piece of ancient Indian architecture?......Never in my life did I behold a work of the like kind".

The author says that he was "attended" by five guides at the site. Strangely enough, they all spoke Portuguese. He rewarded them with five rupees "for their trouble".

Fra San Bartholomeo has some weird notions. Mamallapuram, Elephanta and Kanheri are all of contemporary date and are dedicated to the worship of Mithras. But the art of these monumets is indigenous, not borrowed from Greece or Egypt. There is something comic in the writer's vigorous refutation of a view put forward by some earlier authors that Alexander the Great had built Elephanta and Kanheri. For, he says triumphantly, they were built centuries before the Macedonian conqueror. To clinch the argument, "how could Alexander the Great be capable of building a temple at Mahabalipuram on the coast of Coromandel, a country which he never entered?".

The strongest impact that Mamallapuram created on English literature is in Robert Southey's poem, "The Curse of Kehama", published in 1810. The Lake Poet planned a number of epics based on the mythologies of many countries. "Thalaba the Destroyer", which appared in 1801, deals with the legends of early Mexico, and "Madoc" (1805) with the myths of Arabia. "Kehama" was Southey's last attempt in this style.

The poet never visited India, but he knew of it well. His huge library contained a large number of books on many aspects of India, the pioneer translations of the Sanskrit classics, books on mythology and history. His account of Mamallapuram owes much to Chambers' article. The submerged city struck his imagination. Another work noted above, that of Quintin Graiford, was also in his library.

His imagination feeding on this rich diet, Southey produced a highly melodramatic poem with a very complicated story. Mamallapuram provides the setting of some of the incidents.

The hero of the poem is Ladurlad, a saintly man. A villain named Arvalan pesters Kaliyal, his daughter, with his attentions. Ladurlad rescues her and kills Arvalan. But the latter's father, King Kehama, who has acquired supernatural powers by dint of austerities, curses Ladurlad to a "tortured, savourless, colourless and odourless existence on earth". This is the curse of Kehama.

Ladurlad and Kaliyal go into exile. Arvalan, now a ghost, attempts to resume his molestation of the daughter. She is protected by Lord Ganesa, in whose temple she has sought refuge. Subsequently a handsome Gandharva bears her away to the safety of the Hemakuta heaven. They are joined there by Ladurlad. Kaliyal falls in love with the Gandharva. They enjoy a respite in heaven until they are forced to return to earth. For, Kehama has now acquired supreme

power over Indra by dint of further sacrifices and taken possession of his dominions.

Father and daughter live in a forest hermitage. But a group of so called "yogis" abducts Kaliyal to Puri. The poem is wild and whirling at this stage. At Puri Arvalan has Kaliyal at her mercy. But the Gandharva appears opportunity and saves her for the second time. This respite too is short-lived, for a powerful witch, who is in league with Arvalan takes the Gandharva prisoner with the help of a host of demons, and carries him off to the "ancient sepulchres beneath the sea" at Mamallapuram. Placed at the tender mercies of Arvalan, Kaliyal attempts to kill herself but she is rescued by her father who appears on the scene.

Kaliyal and Ladurlad proceed to Mamallapuram. Ladurlad goes down into the sea in search of the Gandharva, telling his daughter to spend the nights in one of the rock-cut shrines, though they are full of bats. At the bottom of the sea Ladurlad fights with an aquatic man-monster for seven days, rescues the Gandharva and brings him to the shore.

But Arvalan is nothing if not persistent. With his friend the witch he appears at Mamallapuram and is about to seize Kaliyal and the Gandharva. However, he reckons without King Bali, come to earth on his annual visit. Bali carries Arvalan and the witch with him to hell. Kehama now appears from heaven. He falls in love with Kaliyal. He offers to marry her and he lifts the curse on her father. Kehama says that it has been ordained that he and Kaliyal shall drink the cup of immortality together. But the damsel spurns him. Thereupon Kehama smites her with leprosy and reimposes the curse on her father.

In all this confusion the Gandharva effects his escape and proceeds to Mount Kailas, where he is instructed by Siva to go to the city of Yama and await developments. Kehama,

drunk with power, attacks that city, defeats Yama, and seizes the cup of immortality. He drinks it, but this proves fatal to him, for nectar is poison to the wicked.

Kaliyal drinks of the cup and becomes immortal. She also obtains her Gandharva. Ladurlad too is transported to heaven. There they all live happily ever after.

This is an extraordinary story, but it cannot be denied that it is full of high drama. This is how Southey describes the origins of Mamallapuram;

"The sepulchres
Of ancient kings, which Bali in his power
Made in primeval times, and built above them
A city like the cities of the gods--
Being like a god himself".

But the city had to contend with the hungry waves.

"For many an age
Hath Ocean warred against his palaces,
Till overwhelmed beneath the waves--
Not overthrown--so well the awful chief
Had laid their deep foundations".

This was what Ladurlad and Kaliyal, standing on the shore, saw before them;

"Their golden summits in the noon-day light
Shone o'er tne dark green deep that roll'd between
For domes and pinnacles and spires were seen
Peering above the sea......a mournful sight!
Well might the sad beholder ween from thence
What works of wonder the devouring wave
Had swallowed here, when monuments so brave
Bore record of their old magnificence.
And on the sandy shore, beside the verge of ocean
Here and there, a rock-hewn fane
Resisted in its strength the surf and surge

That on its deep foundations beat in vain.
In solitude the Ancient Temples stood
Once resonant with instrument and song
And solemn dance of festive multitude;
Now as the weary ages pass along
Hearing no voice save of the ocean flood
Which roars for ever on their restless shores
Or visiting their solitary caves
The lonely sound of winds, that moan around
Accordant to the melancholy waves".

King Bali has a closer connection with Southey's Mamallapuram than with the historical site, which has only a panel in the Varaha temple to show. The poet tells the famous story well,

"Poor was the boon required, and poor was he
Who begg'd, a little wretch it seemed to be;
But Baly ne'er refused a suppliant's prayer.
He on the dwarf cast down
A glance of pity in contemptuous mood,
And bade him take the boon.
And measure where he would.
Lo, Son of giant birth,
I take my grant, the incarnate Power replies.
With his first step he measured o'er the Earth,
The second spann'd the skies.
Twice have I set my footstep, Veeshno cries,
Where shall the third be placed?
Then Baly knew the God and at his feet
In homage due, he laid his humbled head".

The chastened king asks for mercy and it is granted to him,

"Though he was cast down to Padalon,
Yet there, by Yamen's throne,
Doth Baly sit in majesty and might,
To judge the dead and sentence them aright".

Four years after this prolix, but still interesting, poem was published, an English nobleman, Viscount Valentia, paid a visit to Mamallapuram. He was accompanied by Henry Salt, a well-known artist of the times. Valentia makes a brief reference in a book he published in 1811. "The excavations and carvings are well worthy the attention of travellers". Valentia, who came to the site from Sadras, "indulged himself for three hours in examining them".

What seems to be the first published drawing of the Mamallapuram monuments was made by M. J. Haafner. He was at Sadras between 1779 and 1791 and says that he visited Mamallapuram frequently and made a number of drawings. At this time the British were cccupying Sadras. Haafner describes a visit in a German book, "Reise laengst der Kuste von Coromandel", published in 1806 and 1808. A French translation appeared in two volumes in 1811.

"Whatever one might say against the Hindus", writes Haafner, "one will be convinced on coming to Maweliewarom or Maweliepouram that this people had possessed in ancient times a great degree of culture and the sciences, and the arts have flourished in this country. The ruins which one finds here as well as elsewhere in India surpass all that one knew in this genre, including the famous Egyptian pyramids".

Remarking that "it is really a very surprising site for a stranger who comes here for the first time", Haafner adds, "The sight of these enormous ruins of buildings, so magnificent in ancient times, filled me with melancholy thoughts on the instability of human things. It is here, I said to myself, that a great and famous city raised to the heavens 20 towers and 100 palaces. But today a miserable small village, where some poor Brahmins live in thatched huts"

These musings on the mutability of fortune find an echo in another visitor who came to Mamallapuram in January, 1811.

She called herself "an idle and philosophical observer". A Miss Dundas, a daughter of a British admiral, had arrived in Bombay in May, 1809, along with her father and a sister. Towards the end of the year she married a naval captain named Graham. She was not in good health, and she made two visits by sea to Sri Lanka to recruit her strength. When returning from the second visit she went to Madras and thence to Mamallapuram. She passed by Tirupporur, where there were a "large and very sacred pagoda and a handsome choultry".

Before going to Mamallapuram she took the trouble of learning all that she could about the site. Colonel Colin Mackenzie, the greatest figure in the early European annals of Mamallapuram, gave her much information and also a map of the village. When she arrived at Mamallapuram on the morning of January 13 she found Srinivas, an assistant of his, waiting for her. "Sreenavassie", she writes, "was the best guide I could have had to all that is worthy of remark in the neighbourhood". His real name was Cavally Srinivasiah, and he was probably a brother, or at least a relative, of Cavally Boriah who, Mackenzie said, provided "the first step of my introduction into the portals of Indian knowledge" and of Cavally Ramaswami whose summary of the story of "Keraat Aroon" written for Mackenzie Mrs Graham publishes as an appendix to her "Journal".

Mrs Graham's description of Mamallapuram is so percipient and sympathetic that it is worth dwelling on it. Her party pitched tents "about half a mile from the village, on a little sandy promontory, terminated by a curious ruined pagoda, where we enjoy the sea-breeze in perfection". This "curious pagoda" is the Shore Temple. Mrs Graham conceives that "ancient and dilapidated as it is", it has been "formed of the fragments of still older buildings". Can she have had in mind what her guide might have told her of the shrine or image of Lord Anantasayi by the sea, sung of by Bhutam

Alvar in the second century A D.?

This image, "a gigantic statue of Vishnu Narrayan lies neglected in one corner of the Viranda of the temple". A later account says that the middle shrine was badly damaged, with gaps in its walls.

Mrs Graham calls the two Somaskandas "square tablets, with figures in high relief representing Siva and Parvati seated, with high caps, and Brahma and Vishnu in the background". There are "the remains of a gigantic symbol of Maha Deo" in "the chamber next to the sea".

The Dolotsava mandapa in front of the Talasayana temple, now little noticed, attracted considerable attention among the early European visitors, some of whom drew it. Mrs Graham describes it, a "muntapom" as she calls it. It is "placed before the goparum; it is supported by four slender and curiously wrought pillars, each consisting of a single stone, the shaft being about twenty-five feet. On these columns rests a small dome covered with carved work; and by way of basement to the pillars, are four steps, the sides of which are wrought to lock like wheels, whence the muntapom is sometimes called a god-carriage". This basement has disappeared now.

As for the "goparums", Mrs Graham noticed both in existence at the site. One is a "gateway which, like many others in this part of the country, is unfinished; they are said to have been begun by the Rajah Dhurma, and are therefore called Royal Goparums". This personage is Dharmaraja. The "goparum" in front of the temple has "delicately carved" ornaments, in "surprising taste and lightness". Its "beauty is now increased by its being partially covered with the peepil, which, though it often grows to the size of the banian, sometimes creeps, and attaches itself like the ivy". The second "goparum" is "on the top of a hill behind the temple, and not connected with it".

The monuments Mrs. Graham describes in some detail are "Arjuna's Penance", the Krishna mandapa, the Ganesa ratha, the "rutts" or "radums" which are the rathas, the Mahishamardhani temple, the Olakkanesvara and the "Tiger's Cave" at Saluvankuppam. She did not visit the contiguous Atiranachandesvara or the Mukunda Nayanar temples because neither was then known to exist.

The description of "Arjuna's Penance", "a most extra-ordinary group", is spirited, though it contains factual errors' mistaking Siva far Vishnu. "The face of a large rock is carved into above a hundred figures of men and animals, mostly of the natural size, though some are much larger, and some rather smaller, representing the Tapass of Arjoon, or sacred austerities practised by that hero to obtain from Vishnu a celestial weapon, which was to give him power over all his enemies. He is here seen performing his tapass, standing on the tip of his great toe, with his hands above his head, and his eyes and face turned upwards; at his right hand stands Vishnu, four-armed, and between them a dwarf. The rest of the figures appear in postures of adoration; among them are birds, monkeys, lions, elephants, and figures partly human, with the legs of beasts, and wings at the hips,'.

While Mrs. Graham is confused between Siva and Vishnu, the appendix she publishes, containing Cavally Ramaswami's translation from a "Tellinga Manuscript", correctly identifies the Lord as Siva. It is interesting that the correct literary origin of the sculpture should have been identified at the beginning of the nineteenth century. From the fact that the appendix is entitled "The Story of Keraat Arjoon" it may perhaps be deduced that Bharavi's epic was recognised as the source.

The Krishna mandapa represents "one of the adventures of Christna, the eighth awatar of Vishnu. He is represented as supporting on the tip of his little finger the mountain Gover-d'hana, to protect his worshippers from the wrath of Indra.

who is showering down stones upon them, their flocks, and their herds".

Mrs. Graham's drawing of the Pandava rathas is most delicate and pleasing. Called "radums" in that drawing's title, but in the text here "rutts", the five rathas are "curious models". Again, perhaps, we ought not to read more into this expression than what it contains on the surface, but it is certainly curious that Mrs. Graham has hit upon the precise architectural significance of the rathas, that they are models in rock of contemporary brick and mortar temples which have not survived.

Mrs. Graham's drawing of the Five Rathas depicts a romantic scene, the structures partly covered by vegetation, with coconut trees lifting their slender spires. The sight induced a philosophic mood in her. "The view of these objects together with the loneliness of the place, the depth of the sands, and the distant roarings of the ocean, dispose the mind to meditate concerning the short duration of human pride. History is altogether, and fable almost silent, as to the authors of these works of taste and magnificence; they are forgotten, and the memory of the arts which they practised has perished with them. The monuments they have left now adorn a desert, which Nature, as if in scorn of man, seems to pride herself in decking with gay colours, and fresh smells of every delightful shrub and flower, whose Author can never be mistaken".

Mrs. Graham visited the Pandava rathas twice. She also saw the Pidari and Valayankuttai rathas, located "in a picturesque, spot, about two miles to the westward, which are in the same style with the five great models, though they are not like any one of them, nor do they resemble each other". The Ganesa ratha, then called the "Teer of Arjoon", is an "entire temple cut out of a mass of solid rock".

"In a rocky glen, full of low shrubs, we found a highly finished muntapom, containing two remarkable pieces of sculp-

ture". This is the Mahishamardhani temple. One of the sculptures represents "Vishnu Narrayn sleeping on the serpent Shesha" and the other "Doorga, here called Maha Mordanee. In her character of active virtue, she is employing all her celestial weapons against Maissassoor, the buffalo-headed demon of vice, who is armed with a club".

Mrs Graham walked to Saluvankuppam along the coast to see the "Tiger's Cave". She is one of the few to notice nearby "the large fragment of rock" which is "so tall and narrow that it seems threatening to fall".

Mrs Graham makes some contributions to a possible elucidation of a few perennial Mamallapuram problems, but they are not particularly enlightening. Regarding the alleged submerged city she says, "There is a tradition, that a large city, and five magnificent pagodas, have been swallowed up at this place by the sea; the ruined temple I have mentioned (the Shore Temple), and one still entire in the village, making the seven pagodas whence the place had its name". The arithmetic is untenable.

Another passage refers to another tradition that "during a grievous famine, one of the kings of India residing at his capital, the ancient and famous city of Mahaballipooram, which is now swallowed up by the sea, received certain artificers from the northern countries, with their wives and families, and engaged to feed them, on condition that they employed their talent of cutting and hewing stone to beautify his capital and they accordingly began to form the rocks and temples and grottoes, and to build pagodas, goparums and muntapoms, but the famine ceasing, they returned to their own country, and left their work unfinished". This fable is repeated by many later-authors.

But what counts in Mrs Graham is her sympathy of understanding. This is what she says as, standing near the

Olakkanesvara temple, which she mistakenly thought was dedicated to Ganesa, she looked out across Mamallapuram at the sea on one hand and at the hills of Tirukkazhukunram on the other. "The village, with its houses, gardens, and temples, lay between me and the sea; on the other side a ruined temple on the summit of a hill in the foreground gave a greater distance to the plain, with its little river, and the western mountains melting in the haze of the setting sun; and over my head the branches of the euphorbia, which crowns Ganesa's temple, projected in rude angles, from which the many-coloured convolvulus floated in garlands, waving with the sea-breeze".

In a second book Mrs Graham wrote, "Letters on India", she refers to the Dolotsava mandapa and says of Mamallapuram that it presents "even in its ruins marks of early grandeur. Its sculptured rocks and antique buildings are among the most curious monuments in India". Almost as a matter, ofcourse, she quotes Southey.

Between Mrs. Graham and Mackenzie, the greatest figure in the later annals of Mamallapuram, lie two references. B. Heyne, who seems to have visited the site about 1800, wrote in "Tracts, Historical and Statistical, on India", published in 1814, that the sea has submerged no city off the coast, but that the "ridge of rocks some two miles off shore" has been mistaken for it. He has no high opinion of the sculptures, nor does he think that the rathas and the bas-reliefs can be more than two centuries old. But he does identify "Arjuna's Penance" carrectly.

The other reference is a long entry in "The East India Gazetteer", edited by Walter Hamilton and published in 1815. Under "Mahabalipuram (or the Seven Pagodas)" it runs as follows; 'In the vicinity of this town are the celebrated ruins of ancient Hindoo temples dedicated to Vishnu, generally called the 7 Pagodas, but it is not known for what reason, as

no such number exists here. The name means the city of the great Bali, a character very famous in Hindoo romance. The eye is first attracted by a high rock or rather hill of stone, covered with Hindoo sculptures and works of imagery, so thickly scattered as to convey the idea of a petrified town. Facing the sea there is a pagoda of one single stone, about 16 or 18 feet high, which seems to have been cut on the spot out of a detached rock. On the outside surface of the rock there are bas-relief sculptures, representing the most remarkable persons, whose actions are celebrated in the Mahabharat. Another part of the rock is hollowed out into a spacious room, apparently for the purpose of a choultry.

"On ascending the hill there is a temple cut of the solid rock, with some figures of idols in alto relievo upon the walls, very well finished. At another part of the hill there is a gigantic figure of Vishnu, asleep on a bed, with a huge snake wound round in many coils as a pillow, which figures are all of one piece hewn out of the rock. A mile and a half to the southward of the hill are two pagodas about 30 feet long by 20 wide and the same in height, cut out of the solid rock, and each consisting originally of one single stone. Near to these is the figure of an elephant, as large as life, and of a lion much larger than the natural size; but a just representation of a real lion, which is, however, an animal unknown in this neighbourhood or in the south of India. The whole of these sculptures appear to have been rent by some convulsion of nature, before they were finished.

"The great rock above-described is about 100 yards from the sea; but on the rocks washed by the sea, are sculptures, indicating that they once were out of it. East of the village and washed by it, is a pagoda of stone containing the Lingam and dedicated to Mahadev. The surf here breaks far out, and (as the Brahmins assert) over the ruins of the city of Mahabalipuram, which was once large and magnificent; and there is reason to believe, from the traditional records of the

natives, that the sea, on this part of the Coromandel coast, has been encroaching on the land. All the most ancient buildings and monuments at this place are consecrated to Vishnu, whose worship appears to have predominated on this coast while, on the opposite coast, in the neighbourhood of Bombay, that of Mahadeva, or Siva, prevailed to a greater extent'

This entry, which contains many errors of facts, is only of curious interest. Its authorities are Chambers, Goldingham, Mrs. Graham, Lord Valentia etc. In fact, it has borrowed whole sentences from these writers. It seems to suggest that three of the Five Rathas and the bull were so deeply buried in sand that they could not be seen at this time.

Colonel Colin Mackenzie, the first Surveyor-General of India, is the greatest figure in the modern Mamallapuram bibliography. He is equally closely associated with another historical site, that of the Amaravati stupa, some of the sculptures of which he helped rescue, and on which he wrote a valuable article. At Mamallapuram he and his assistants collected a number of artifacts. He also gathered a quantity of manuscripts relating to the monuments and the history of the site. But he recovered no copper plate inscriptions, as Mrs. Graham asserts.

Mackenzie was a many-sided personality. He landed in Madras on September 2, 1783, with a letter of introduction to Hesther Johnston, a daughter of Lord Napier, who had employed him when he was still in Scotland to collect all the available knowledge the Hindus possessed of logarithms in particular and of mathematics in general, to be used in a life of Napier, the inventor of the English logarithms, he was writing. Thus began Mackenzie's introduction to Indian studies which ended at his death on May 8, 1821, with an enormous collection of materials; 8,076 inscriptions, 6,218 coins, 3,000 stone and copper plate grants, 2,630 drawings, 1,568 manuscripts, 106 images and 78 plates.

The Johnstons were in Madurai, and there Mackenzie went. Thrown in the company of pandits, he realised that there was waiting to be collected a vast quantity of literature and antiquities which the historian could use He now formed "the plan of making that collection which afterwards became the favourite object of his pursuit and which is now (1832) the most extensive and most valuable collection of historical documents relative to India that was ever made by any individual in Europe or in Asia".

Mackenzie served as a soldier, made difficult surveys of regions which the East India Company had captured and at the same time he collected antiquities. He was a generous and kind employer. His employees were "devoted to him and his service with a devotion that was obviously as much inspired by personal affection for himself as by a zealous regard for their common studies".

The names of many these assistants have survived, Ramaswami, Sreenivasiah, Sivaramiah, Baskariah, Moba Row and Abdul Aziz. But those closest to him were two brothers from Eluru, Cavelly Venkata Boriah and Cavelly Venkata Lakshmiah. Another brother was Cavelly Venkata Ramaswami, who was head translator to Mackenzie in 1795, and whose translation of the story of Arjuna's penance Mrs. Graham published as an appendix to her first book.

Boriah was a prodigy. When ten years old, he began to study Sanskrit poetry. He also learnt Persian and Hindusthani. At the age of eighteen he entered Mackenzie's employment as a writer or clerk. "He could draw maps very neatly and constructed maps that were much admired by his master". He collected coins and "made facsimiles of inscriptions in different obsolete characters. When he deciphered the Hala Kannada characters inscribed on a tablet found at Dodare . . . . his master was highly gratified". But Boriah died in 1803, aged only twenty-six.

Mackenzie mourned him. He had a monument erected to his memory. He wrote of him, "The connection that I then (1796) formed with one person, a native and a Brahmin, was the first step in the introduction into the portals of Indian knowledge . . . . . From the moment the talents of the lamented Boriah were applied, a new avenue to Hindu knowledge was opened, and though I was deprived of him at an early age, his example and instructions were so happily followed up by his brethren and disciples that an establishment was gradually formed through which the whole of our provinces might be gradually analysed by the method thus fortuitously begun and successfully followed so far".

Boriah's place as head interpreter to Mackenzie was taken by his younger brother, Cavally Venkata Lakshmiah, who figures in the Mamallapuram bibliography in his own right. Mackenzie was as devoted to Lakshmiah as to Boriah and on his appointment as the first Surveyor General of India, he was transferred to Calcutta, he arranged to pension his assistants in Madras, Lakshmiah receiving a grant of land.

Such was the leader and such his assistants who secured the most extensive corpus of information about any ancient Indian site. The collection consists chiefly of temple inscriptions and of records based on local legends and traditions. The epigraphs are of the greatest value, but the records, called "local tracts", vary in quality. Some are totally unhistorical, but not a few are highly valuable.

A manuscript entitled the "Kaifiyat of Tirukkudamallai and Tirukkalukkunram" gives "an account of the temple of Mavelipura which enjoyed certain privileges". Another manuscript "contains a puranic account of the place".

A third manuscript is full of interest as being perhaps the first Indian view of the monuments and the site. It is a translation by Lakshmiah, made in June, 1803, of an account,

in Telugu, written by Lakshmiah himself, on the "pagodas, Chariots and mantapams of Mahavalipuram".

The account begins dramatically. "On the North side of the hill, is an Isvara temple. In this is Isvara. Lord Clive took away the Nandi in front of this temple". The despoiler was the second Lord Clive, who was Governor of Madras from 1793 to 1803.

The Ganesa ratha was then called Arjuna ratha, and what is now named Arjuna ratha next to the Draupadi ratha, was called the Nakula ratha. Of the Ganesa ratha properly so named which is near the hill, Lakshmiah says. "The stone has been cut into the shape of a Mantapa, with two pillars and a Garbhagriha, in which was placed Siva. When the Linga was carried off by Bu........the people of this place took an image of Vinayaka which was near and put it into the Garbhargriha".

Lakshmiah gives an elaborate description of "Arjuna's Penance", pointing out that it follows the story of Arjuna and the hunter. "Here is Arjuna, his two arms extended over his head, performing penance, and here is four-armed Isvara as he appeared (to Arjuna)"

Above the Ramanuja mandapa is "the Mantapa of Velugotti Singama Nayadu. This has 4 pillars. It is not built with stones brought by workmen, nor is it built artistically. It is now all in ruins. In fact, has now totally disappeared. Singama, as already pointed out, was a brother of a Velugotti chief prominent in the last years of the Vijayanagar empire.

Lakshmiah explains how the curious name given to the Olakkanesvara temple arose. "When this city flourished, a small fanam used to be collected from each shop, making a quarter measureful of fanams, for the god in this temple. In the Tamil language they call a quarter measure 'olakku'...... The god has rolled away somewhere. They say that if all the

jungle is cut down, that Linga will be found".

Of the Adivaraha temple the account says, "This very god appeared to King Harisekhara, and when asked by him the reason of his facing the west, the god replied that Varadarajaswami would thereafter appear as an incarnation in the Punyakotivimana at Kanchi and that therefore he faced in that direction . . . . . The worship of this god continues to this day. The god has been painted in colours, as in pictures".

Lakshmiah identifies the royal sculptures on the south wall as "Harisekhara and his two wives". Of those on the north he merely says that their names are "unknown"

There are many interesting observations on the Five Rathas and the sculptures nearby. Behind the Draupadi ratha is "the figure of a large sacred bull facing to the west. It is buried in the ground. Some of the sand has been removed for the purpose of seeing this figure, so half of it is visible".

There is a curious statement that " at the bottom " of the nearby Arjuna ratha, here called "Nakula's Vimana", "is something of a Mantapa. There are no figures in it."

The Bhima ratha, " a very large one ", has been " struck by a thunder bolt and split in the middle ". The Dharmaraja ratha has "2 parapets for the performances of Pradakshina".

A point of interest about the Talasyana Perumal temple is that "in the doorway of the Gopura, on either side, are paintings of groups of figures and monkeys".

There is a valuble account of the Shore Temple as it appeared to a Hindu visitor at the beginning of the nineteenth century. "On the Sea shore to the East of the village is the seven-walled[37] Siva temple. The (local) name of the god went with the Sthalapurana, and has since become known to none.

Of the seven walls (prakara) only two now appear. There are signs of three (more)walls; whether traces remain of the other walls cannot be ascertained as (their site) is buried in the sea.

"There are two Garbhagrihas, in one of which is the Linga of Siva. Its height is that of a man's chest. The Yoni is not visible. How deep the Linga is below is not known. This Garbagriha had been built with six sandal wood beams above the god. Of these some sinners have been taken away two. Four beams now remain·········The figures of lions etc; have become effaced by the action of the waves. The figures of twenty or thirty lions etc; are now visible. The Nandis which were on the walls have fallen down. Within the second wall lies Sri Maha Vishnu with his head to the South. In front of the temple is placed a pillar. That pillar is now in the sea. The water there is knee deep".

There occurs an interesting statement, "On the West side is a small Gopura". But it turns out that Lakshmiah confuses the vimana of the west Siva shrine with a gopura.

There is something naive about this account in places. However, it is valuable as setting forth the views and opinions of the Hindus of the locality, an aspect more important to the history of Mamallapuram than the statements of foreigners who, while they were certainly interested in the monuments, could not be expected to possess that intimate knowledge which can come only from birth.

The Mackenzie manuscripts contain details of how Mackenzie's agents collected artifacts and information. One of the reports is entitled "Babu Rao's report on a journey to Mahabalipur from 8th to 27th October, 1816". The titles of some other reports are, "Report composed by Appavu, respecting the account and Traditions of Mahabalipuram"; "Journal and Report of Appavu on his fourth Journey to Mahabalipuram and from thence through the Jagir and the Arcot districts from

October 1818 to the 29th May 1819"; "Journal (of Subha Rao) from Madras to Mahabalipuram"; "Ditto (i.e. Report) of C. V. Ramaswami's Journey to Mahabalipuram".

The following are extracts from a typical report:-

"25th......Thence proceeded to Mahabalipuram, collected some coins on the way to Patipollam, Devanairi and Salvankupam and the other places along the Coast where ancient Coins are usually found".

"26th......By order I waited upon Messrs. Clark, Gwatkin and the other Gentlemen who were on an excursion here. They ordered me to show them all the curiosities. Accordingly I shewed them all the remarkable places as Mahish Asura Mardhani and Ashta Grama Devati......".

"27th........Proceeded with those gentlemen to Sadras and shewed them the Kasi Modu or Eminence where Coins are found at Kalipakam[38] on the further or South side of Sadras. At their desire I procured some ancient Copper coins, which I shewed them. They did not return to me the Coins".

"28th........Mr. Clarke sent for me and expressed his wish to visit the Mantapam that was lately discovered on the South side near Saluvakupam together with Kassi Modu. I accordingly went there and shewed them all the curiosities there".

The lately discovered Mantapam was the Atiranachanda temple. The manuscript states, " This temple, excavated in a Solid Granite Rock, was laid open by the removal of the Sand that had covered it for Ages on the . . . . 1816, by Cols. Murray and Mackenzie C. M.".

The Mackenzie collection contains thirty-seven drawings, of the sculpture and architecture of Mamallapuram. Only six of the inscriptions have been included. Four are from the Talasayana Perumal temple and one from the Adivaraha temple.

The location of the sixth is not specified. Evidently Mackenzie's assistants concentrated their attention on coins, local traditions and drawings. Lakshmayya says of the inscription in the Ganesa ratha that it is in "unknown" characters.

After the antiquarian the romantic. This was Reginald Heber, the second Bishop Suffragan of Calcutta, come to southern India on a visitation. "We travelled all night (from Madras), a practice which I am not very fond of, but which circumstances rendered desirable", he writes in his book, the long title of which is "Narrative of a Journey through the Upper provinces of India, from Calcutta to Bombay, 1824-1825. With notes upon Ceylon. An account of a Journey to Madras and Southern provinces, 1826, and letters written in India" "and exactly at day break, reached the rocky beach below the seven pagodas, and where the surf, according to the Hindoos, roll's and roars over the city of Bali". The exact date of Heber's visit was March 14, 1826. He died at Tiruchi three weeks after this visit. His book was published posthumously in 1828.

Heber had read Southey and remembered the descriptions in "Kehama". He made a sketch of the scene, " but it is one of those which is nothing except in the hands of a painter".

"One very old temple of Vishnu stands immediately on the brink (of the sea), and amid the dash of the spray, and there are some small remains of architecture, among which a tall pillar, supposed by some to be a lingam, is conspicuous, which rise from amidst the waves, and give proof that in this particular spot (as at Madras) the sea has encroached on the land, though in most other parts of the Coromandal coast it seems rather receding than advancing.

"There are also many rocks rising through the white breakers, which the fancy of the Brahmins points out as ruins' and the noise of the surf, the dark shade of the remaining

building, the narrow slip of dark smooth sand, the sky just reddening into dawn, and lending its tints to the sea, together with the remarkable desolation of the surrounding scenery, were well calculated to make one remember with interest the description in "Kehama", and to fancy that one saw the beautiful form of Kaliyal in her white mantle, pacing sadly along the shore, and watching till her father and lover should emerge from the breakers. In two points the picture only fails; the caverns in which she was to lodge at night are at least a mile from high water mark, and in this climate it is at noon-day only, not as a bed-chamber, that a cavern will be preferred to the open air".

Heber believed that the "real city of Maha-Bali poor, whose ruins stand among the cliffs at the distance of a short half-mile inland" had "really been a place of considerable importance as a metropolis of the ancient kings of the race of Pandion". Its rocks "which, in themselves, are pretty and picturesque, are carved out into porticos, temples, bas-reliefs etc on a much smaller scale indeed than Elephanta or Kennery (Kanheri), but some of them very beautifully executed. They differ from those of the north and west of India (which are almost all dedicated to Siva or Kali) in being in honour of Vishnu, whose different avatars are repeated over and over again in the various temples, while I only saw the solitary lingam, if it be one, which I have mentioned, in the sea and one unfinished cave which struck me as intended for a temple of a destroying power".

Heber was impressed by the art of what he saw. "Many of the bas-reliefs are of great spirit and beauty; there is one of an elephant with two young ones strikingly executed; and the general merit of the work is superior to that of Elephanta, though the size is extremely inferior". However, the lions of Mamallapuram disappointed Heber.

The bishop and his two chaplains, the Revs. Robinson

and Doran, visited the Talasayana Perumal temple. The priests received them in style. "Two boys preceded us with a pipe and a small pair of cymbals, and their appearance among these sculptures was very picturesque and appropriate".

Heber has left a good description of the Bali sculpture in the Varaha rock temple. "Notwithstanding the supposed connection of these ruins with the great Bali, I only saw one bas-relief which has reference to his story, and which has considerable merit. It represents Bali seated on his throne, and apparently shrinking in terror at the moment when Vishnu, dismissing his disguise of a Brahmin dwarf, under which he had asked 'the king of the three worlds' to grant him three paces of his kingdom, appears in his celestial and gigantic form, striding from earth to heaven, and 'wielding all weapons in his countless hands', over the head of the unfortunate Raja, who, giant as he himself is said to have been, is represented as a mere Lillyputian in the presence of the 'preserving deity'."

In the same year that Heber's book was published Dr. Guy Babington read a paper to the Royal Asiatic Society in London, "An account of the Sculptures and Inscriptions at Mahamalaipura". Babington had visited the site in the company of one Andrew Hudleston "several years since". His main interest is study of the inscriptions. Some knowledge of these must have been disseminated by the labours of Mackenzie's assistants, and the discovery of the vital records on the Adiranachanda temple, which was excavated out of sand in 1816, made their study feasible. To Babington goes the credit for noticing some part of the concordance which is the basis of a correct conclusion about the authorship of the Mamallapuram monuments. But there is also some incidental information of value in his pages.

Babington declines to believe in the submerged city. One of his reasons is "the fruitless attempts made by the late Mr. Ellis and Colonel Mackenzie to ascertain the existence of

sunken buildings by careful soundings made off the shore". The lower part of "Arjuna's Penance" was covered with earth when Babington and Hudleston saw it. Babington fears that the Krishna mandapa and the Shore Temple would collapse soon.

"As this rock", he says of the former, "is going fast to decay owing to a spring of water from above, which keeps its surface constantly wet, it is not improbable that in the course of a few years it will be entirely decomposed". As for the Shore Temple, "such is the dilapidated condition of this structure, that the period cannot be far distant when it will no longer exist. The effects of the salt-water spray add much to those of time in hastening its decay".

Incidentally, Bablington says that the Vishnu image in the central shrine was "exposed to the open air" because the walls of its chamber had "given way".

It appears that the ceiling of the Varaha rock temple was painted, and that Lady Hobart, wife of Lord Hobart, who was Governor of Madras from 1794 to 1798, took away the linga in the Ganesa ratha and an image of Hanuman, to be sent to England. Lady Hobart it is said, gave twenty pagodas to the villagers "as a consideration". The Hanuman image stood in a mandapa near the "Dolotsava" mandapa.

Babington noticed "three kinds of inscriptions at Mahamalaipur, two of which have hitherto remained undeciphered. It is also highly probable that three other kinds are to be met with in this neighbourhood". (He means Saluvankuppam).

The three kinds of epigraphs are "an ancient kind" in the Adivaraha temple, the record of Rajendra I's second regnal year; the inscription on the Ganesa ratha (which "one of the Jain Brahmins in the employ of Col. Mackenzie" deciphered

and translated) and those from Saluvankuppam. Then there are the "inscriptions over the basso-relievo figures" on the Dharmaraja ratha.

All this might be rudimentary, but what is important is that Babington should have noticed the epigraphical concordance. "The first three slokas in my inscription (on the Ganesa ratha) are not found in the others (that is, in those on the Atiranachanda, Dharmaraja and Ramanuja mandapas); my fourth sloka is the same as theirs. The fifth, sixth and seventh slokas of my inscription are wanting in the others. My eighth and ninth slokas are their first and second, and my tenth is their third".

V

A HOAX

This learned effusion was followed by a hoax. In 1834 there was published "The Oriental Annual or Scenes in India; comprising Twenty-five Engravings from original drawings by William Daniell R.A. and a descriptive Account by Rev. Hobart Caunter B.D". The hoax is that the artists Thomas and William Daniell who, the Rev. Mr. Caunter says, accompanied him on a visit to Mamallapuram in the winter of a year he does not specify were at the site in 1792-93, whereas Caunter was born in 1794. It is even doubtful whether he ever saw Mamallapuram. The Daniells might have given him some information, if indeed his account is not fictitious. He apparently repays this by abusing the drawings of Hudleston which had appeared in Babington's paper.

Caunter, who was on the Bombay establishment of the East India Company, resigned the service in 1814 because he was "soon disgusted with Oriental life, having discovered much to his disappointment nothing on the continent of Asia to interest him". Yet he says in "The Oriental Annual" that India was "the country which I fixed upon as the scene of my projected wanderings as soon as I came of age".

Caunter says, "We spent several days at Mahabalipuram, examining all the extraordinary monuments of art in its neighbourhood, which abounds with objects of natural as well as artificial interest. Mr. William Daniell took the opportunity, during our stay, of making several very accurate and finished drawings; and here he found subjects in every respect worthy of his pencil".

It is difficult to say whether any value should be attached to Caunter's remarks. Giving him the benefit of doubt, one may extract a few of them.

"On the beach stands a very ancient Hindoo temple, much injured by constant exposure to the sea-air and to the violence of the monsoons. Antiquaries and all searchers into the primitive history of the Hindoos, have been puzzled to fix the date of this temple and those in the neighbourhood; the style of architecture is perfectly unlike that of any other part of India. It is said that the Egyptians colonised here; and there are some ingenious theorists who give to the Indians the priority over the Egyptians in the attainment of a settled style of architecture of the most stately description, when all the rest of the world were of nomadic habits, living in tents, or in the umbrageous recesses of the jungles".

The Shore Temple "is a compact and beautiful stone-work and stands upon a rock jutting from the land into the sea. It is the remnant, such at least is the oral tradition of the place, of an ancient city, which has been overthrown by the constantly encroaching waters, and of which this structure alone remains entire".

Caunter praises "Arjuna's Penance" but in terms suspiciously sincere. "The natural ease of attitude and vigour of action displayed in this interesting group (the elephants) are truly astonishing. They are done with a truth and spirit which give them that sort of symmetrical analogy to the living animal which the antique bears to the human figures. In a word, they are masterpieces of their kind".

The Five Rathas are "beautifully decorated temples, cut out of huge blocks of granite, which are truly marvellous specimens of taste and skill". The so called 'butter ball' is a "remarkable mass of unfractured granite, which has been so nicely poised by nature upon a pointed base, forming an obtuse inverted cone, that it may be easily rocked by a single arm, though a hundred would not dislodge it from its ancient bed".

From Caunter one proceeds to James Fergusson who visited the site in 1841[39]. His initial work on the subject appeared two years later.

In 1844 was published in Madras a guide to Mamallapuram written by John Braddock, an army officer. It is said to have been considered the best available in his day, and it is easy to see why. It provides clear information and attempts to identify many of the sculptures.

Braddock's critique of the art of the Krishna Mandapa is ill judged, but it at least indicates a tendency to look at the sculptures critically. Most aesthetic appreciation before him had been in general terms. Braddock says, "The whole group looks clumsy; the proportions are bad; the countenances are destitute of expression; and little praise is due to it either as a work of art or imagination. So singular a deliverance from sudden destruction ought to have supplied the artist with a subject capable of being embodied with great spirit, but here instead, is an inanimate, meaningless group, which but for the principal figure, would not at all have interpreted the story".

The Talasyana Perumal temple was in a dilapidated condition. It was "exposed to the weather". It was "completely overshadowed with trees, which had taken root in the walls, and whose branches, forcing their way through the joints of the stones, had contributed much to its dilapidation and present ruinous appearance". "A small palmyra tope" had grown around the Five Rathas in Braddock's time. He does not give the names of any of the five except the Draupadi.

Braddock seems to be the first author to refer to the Mukunda Nayanar temple. He describes it as "a small temple built of hewn stone . . . . The entrance is nearly filled with sand, and the walls are much dilapidated by trees which grow out of them. There is nothing, I believe, inside".

The Shore Temple was "formerly surrounded by an outer stone wall, part of which only is now standing. Two pillars also remain showing the position of the western gateway. Huge heaps of granite stones, on several of which are sculptured figures, lie in front and on each side of the eastern temple" (shrine).

Between Braddock and Charles Gubbins, whose article in 1854 is the last of its particular kind, there was a royal visitor to the site. He was Prince Waldemar of Prussia, who travelled from Madras by sea, apparently the only visitor of whom there is record to do so. He was accompanied by Walter Eliot, an antiquary of note associated with the recovery of some of the Amaravati sculptuers, and by Wilhelm Hoffmeister, his personal physician.

The three made the journey on December 28, 1844. Dr. Hoffmeister, who recorded it in his book, "Travels in Ceylon and Continental India, including Nepal and other Parts of the Himalayas, to the borders of Thibet", which was published in 1848, says that the sea was "rough and tempestuous". The account, one of the few by Germans that have been published, is a sympathetic one. It says, "A piece of rocky ground contains the wonderful remnants of the primeval sanctuaries; each rocky mass is transformed into a splendid temple, with beautiful figures and sculptured ornaments, all hewn in the living rock".

The visitor was much impressed by the dangers of the surf which beats upon the shore. This, together with astonishment at the frail "masula" boats, is a familiar theme in the books of visitors to Madras in the last three centuries, and Hoffmeister has some graphic passages. On the outward journey "we were borne over the surf and landed on the shore with great difficulty, in a fragile bark, whose planks were fastened with coco-nut fibre ("coir") instead of nails, and stopped with tar; it was kept in motion by 12 wild-looking rowers,

stripped to the skin, and plying their oars to the measured sound of horrid cries and screams under the name of singing. The coast is very flat, yet I have never seen a higher surf. Our Hindoos availed themselves most skilfully of the rushing flow of the last huge wave to deposit us, without too complete a soaking, on dry land". The return journey was even more dangerous. "The breakers drove us back towards the shore. The billowing waves, towering to the height of ten feet, appeared frightening, and twice our rude Indian bark dashed back upon the coast with a crashing sound; at last, however, the dauntless sailors succeeded in bringing us safely across the surf". On the whole, it seems just as well that most visitors preferred the safer road or canal.

Gubbins' article is valuable in two respects. It presents a picture of the Shore Temple as it was in his time. The monument was "surrounded on three sides by a granite screen of ten or twelve feet high, and about five feet distant from the body of the temple; on the fourth side (the west) stands a miniature of the temple, opening towards the west and bearing every appearance of having originally been its principal entrance". This "miniature" was, of course, a "gopura"

The Mamallapuram inscriptions of Rajaraja I's time in the eleventh century leave no doubt that the area near the Shore Temple was under use by man, and was not a wilderness of sand. One of these epigraphs, as already indicated, mentions a large flower garden south of the temple. Another records a donation to develop another garden to be named after the king, apparently near the temple. Besides, it is certain that in so commercially an important port city that Mamallapuram was for many centuries this area must have been populated. Gubbins tries to reconstruct it.

"The ground immediately inland from the shore temple has obviously been built over to a considerable extent. The extremely well-cemented foundations of ancient walls are now

dug out, as required for building materials, by the inhabitants of the neighbouring village; or for the improvement of the brick pagoda".

Veligotti Singama Nayudu crops up in Gubbins, who refers to a passage in Heyne's "Tracts, Historical and Statistical, on India . . . . ." published in 1814, which says that "about 500 years ago a Poligar of the name of Balicota Simcomnaidu lived here, and began to build a little fort on the top of the rock some ruins of which still remain, as bricks etc".

After Gubbins the nature of Mamallapuram studies changes. The earlier writers were enthusiastic amateurs. They popularised the monuments, gathered materials for later scholarly studies, and described what some of the monuments looked like in their time. With the arrival of scholars, heralded by Fergusson, they no longer have a place in the history of Mamallapuram. The epigraphist and the archaeologist take over. The antiquarian disappears.

A reference to the "sthalapurana" of Mamallapuram occurs in a gazetteer published in Madras in 1855. A traveller who visited the site in 1831 says that the local Brahmins told him that the "sthalapurana" contains nothing to explain the monuments. This is true enough, but then "sthalapuranas" were not written to elucidate art history.

The local Brahmins told the visitor of a story current among themselves to account for the origins of the monuments and for their unfinished state. A certain northern prince, about a thousand years before, intended to build a huge temple. But his artisans rejected the terms he offered and migrated in a body to the south. They set to work at Mamallapuram. But after some five years they were induced to return north. This is why the monuments are incomplete. This is a mere fable.

This kind of fantasy continued to dog Mamallapuram studies for some more time. One would think that a resident of Madras would be careful enough to present a correct picture of the monuments when writing on them. But the Reverend W. O. Simpson, who produced a "condensed and annotated" edition of Edward Moore's book, "The Hindu Pantheon", in 1864 asserts that there are no images on the Five Rathas. But his description of Mamallapuram is picturesque enough, "A dark grove of palmyra trees furnishes a rich background, amidst which granite boulders rise, some in the bare rough outline of nature; others excavated with rooms and pillars, thick with the images of gods. Among these are the five Rathas, fanes hewn from the solid rock; niches there are but no images; and shrines once spoken of with reverence, but now not trod save by the feet of strangers, men of foreign blood and foreign faith".

British visitors from Madras began at about this time to take photographs of the monuments and a few to conduct some rudimentary kind of excavations. Thus, in 1871 Dr. Alexander Hunter, who founded the Madras School of Arts in 1850, brought workmen from Madras to clear the Atiranachanda mandapa of enveloping sand. It will be recalled that Mackenzie had excavated this monument out of sand some five decades earlier. Hunter took casts of the inscriptions here as well as of all those occurring in Mamallapuram. He visited Mamallapuram many times, in 1844, for the first time and in 1846 when he made sketches.

Hunter made some excavations near "Arjuna's Penance". He got the Naga king "set upright and photographed". Lord Napier, who was Governor of Madras from 1866 to 1872, visited the site and had the ground in front of the sculpture dug to a depth of about eight feet. This brought to light "a great number of figures and animals and showed that the old road must have passed in front of the rock at a depth of five or six feet below the present level".

Sir. Richard Temple, who visited the site in 1875, found a "most disagreeable" innovation. "With the laudable object of keeping the sand from again filling up the excavated space in front of this sculpture (Arjuna's Penance), some one . . . who it was I did not care to enquire . . . has caused the sides of it to be bricked up and railings to be placed round the tope. But how has this been done? Bright and very modern chunam has been used to fasten the bricks, and the railings are in the most approved European style (blackened) with bright-white chunamed brick posts, after the manner of railings round a second-rate bungalow compound. The whole appears to be as much in keeping with its surrounding as those trumpery shrines or baldacchini, so common in continental cathedrals, are with the noble buildings they disfigure". There is unfortunately too much reason to echo this complaint today.

Temple refers to the gubernatorial excavations. (Fortunately these did not prove as destructive as those ordered at the site of the Amaravati stupa by the Duke of Buckingham, a predecessor of Lord Napier's). "Lord Napier had the front of this sculpture cleared away to the depth of some eight or ten feet so as to show the whole of it; at the foot of the excavation lies part of the broken tusk of one of the elephants in the sculpture. Lord Napier endeavoured to have it fastened in its place, but without success. The tusk was broken in the days of Dr. Babington".

It was Napier who had the monkey group dug out of sand near the Mukunda Nayanar temple and placed in its present location near "Arjuna's Penance". This is unfortunate, for the sculpture might be mistaken to be a part of the forest scene in the bas-relief.

Temple's article, though censorious of the locals, a thoroughly ignorant, unreliable and greedy rabble, nevertheless contains some interesting sidelights. The Talasayana Perumal temple, badly dilapidated in Braddock's time, some

thirty years previously, was now a "well-kept modern-looking shrine". It was repaired about 1865. The sculptures in the Krishna Mandapa, "which are indistinct and bad, are covered by an opaque or chalky light-blue mould formed by leakages through the rock. There are also abundant signs of its having been used as a choultry, for which purpose, I am told, it is still used occasionally".

One of the few appreciative references to the unfinished gopura on the hill, approximately above the Krishna mandapa, occurs in Temple. "A very handsome and solid structure" had it been completed, "it would certainly have been the most commanding object in the place". This gopura continues to be ignored by most visitors even today, though it is a far more impressive structure than the similar one in front of the Talasayana Perumal temple. [41]

On the ceiling of the Shore Temple "may be seen two beams of wood, apparently as old as the temple itself. The Brahmans said that they are of sandal wood . . . The large lingam in this temple (the eastern shrine) was broken, according to local tradition, by an English officer some 80 years ago (about 1795) who took away the top of it—an act of vandalism one finds it hard to forgive".

It is something of an experience at a site the beginnings of which are anonymous and which have to be strenuously guessed at to be able to learn of the origin of at least one monument, even if, as it turns out, it is only about a century and a half old. Temple says that the Gangana mandapa was built about 1815 "by a wealthy man, and the stones used in its construction were, according to the Brahmans, taken from the temples and buildings about. Three of these stones are inscribed, but the inscriptions are very faint. One of them is about 4 feet from the ground, the other two are immediately under the roof".

The Mamallapuram bibliography thus far is almost exclusively European with the exception of Cavally Lakshmiah, Ramaswami and other assistants of Mackenzie's. About 1875, C. Sankaran Nair, later a legal and political luminary, says in his autobiography he visited Mamallapuram by canal. His interest was religious rather than archaeological.

Sankaran Nair says that the canal trip from Madras to Mamallapuram was "most enjoyable on the moonlit night as the boat slowly glided along. The music of the surf (in the sea to the left) made one sleep. On the right side at intervals on the hill tops were small temples with their bells ringing It was a dream. We arrived at Mahabalipuram in the morning. To visitors from over the seas it is the architectural beauty of the works that appeals; to me it is not so. It is the ancient stories that come to one's memory; Arjuna's Tapas visualised Arjuna."

A long essay by R. B. Branfill,[42] published in a Madras magazine in 1882, adds little to our knowledge of the monuments. There is only the minor point that there were now three beams on the ceiling of the Shore Temple.

When the Archaeological Survey of India first came to Mamallapuram it is difficult to say. Many of its scholars have made significant contributions to our knowledge of the monuments. Among the earliest were Dr. Eugen Hultzsch, the pioneer epigraphist, and Alexander Rea. They were followed by Longhurst. Burgess, the second Director-General, appears to have visited Mamallapuram in his time, but Cunningham, his predecessor, never did.

A statement of Rea, published in 1887, gives rise to a puzzle. When he went to Mamallapuram along with Hultzsch in the second week of December 1886, he says, he made a "few slight excavations and discovered a hitherto unnoted cave temple. I removed some of the soil in front, which

covered the floor to a depth of 10 feet, so that the facade is now exposed to view." Could this rock temple be one of these on which work had just started and then abandoned so that little notice has been taken of it? Otherwise it is imposs-ble that a monument in a place like Mamallapuram, so much exposed to scholars and general visitors, should have remained unidentified these nine decades.

There is another puzzle in a remark attributed to Rea in a book, "Indian Archaeology", by M. A. Ananthalwar, published about half a century ago. Rea refers to "the Mukunthanyanar temple, the Isvara temple and the base of Chetty's temple". What could "Chetty's temple" be?

But another of Rea's quoted remarks is stimulating, "Mr Rea is of opinion that these caves, monoliths and structures are all see mingly without very much difference of age, or diversity in their architectural details".

The canal journey to Mamallapuram from Madras was abandoned about the beginnings of the twentieth century in favour of the road by way of Chingleput and Tirukkazhu-kunram which, in its turn, has now been superseded by the direct road via Tirupporur or Covelong. Some accounts of the canal journey have been given, and it is proper to refer to one of the visits by the older road. An excellent account of this appears in "Tope and Turban" by Lieutenant-Colonel H. A. Newell, published in 1920.

One new year's eve Newell travelled from Madras by car. Beyond Chingleput, "the palm-fringed road commanded attractive views of the great lake and verdant hills beyond . . . . The country was uneven, hillocks springing up in all directions . . . . Suddenly a chain of four hills stood out sharply against the blue sky. Dark, fortress-like walls girdled the highest peak dominated by the grey spire of the old Vedagirisvara Temple".

East of Tirukkazhukunram "villages were succeeded by paddy fields, which, in turn, gave place to desolate stretches of flat red brown earth broken by cactus, and an occasional casuarina plantation. A clump of bamboo mingled with the palms and tamarinds lining the route".

As the visitor approached Mamallapuram, "over the tops of the trees, to the east, the brown tower of the lighthouse at Seven Pagodas struck a note of exclamation against the clear blue of the sky . . The ground was a flat sandy waste varied by a few boulders, and slabs of pinkish brown rock. Dark against the blue horizon a slender ring of palm trees drew a green circle about the khaki wilderness". The visitor crossed the canal, which he calls the Palar, by boat.

As soon as he landed on the eastern bank, the scene smote the visitor. "In the foreground an uneven sandy ridge extended, from north to south piled pell-mell with rocks and giant boulders. Palms shot up from the medley. A small square shrine perched on the grey cliff out of which it was carved. Nearby rose the modern lighthouse, smooth, and smug, in its neat white cap. It struck a strangely jarring note in an otherwise perfect harmony, for time, working with matchless art, had so brought the works of man into accord with those of nature, that both seemed part of one and the same grand primevel scheme".

There is little of interest in Newell's description of the monuments except that he calls the Bhima ratha "the so-called Chinese ratha". Thus we end this account where we began, Signor Niccolao Manucci's Chinese sculptures of Mamallapuram.

VI
SOLE AUTHOR

Mamallapuram studies are now about two centuries old. It is no longer possible to believe in the submerged city, however attractive the notion may be. It is indisputable that in no sense was Mamallapuram 'created' by Narasimha I. It had been in existence at least seven centuries earlier. The great bas-relief cannot be identified as anything but Arjuna's penance. The history of the site after the Vijayanagar peace was not the utter blank that the British who, on their arrival at the site in the eighteenth century, concluded from the neglected state of the monuments that it was.

The most important of the questions is the authorship of the monuments. The view which would partition the monuments and even parts of them among the Pallava kings of the seventh-eighth century has been opposed by not a few scholars. Thus, a recent writer like Mr. T. N. Subramaniam (1968) says, 'I have a feeling that all the monolithic monuments of Mamallapuram were the creations in the time of Rajasimha. Similarly all the inscriptions there, some of them which are now assigned to Narasimha I and Paramesvaravarman I, have to be attributed to Rajasimha'.[43]

Fergusson himself expressed a similar view. Surprisingly, this has escaped notice. Fergusson often changed his mind on this problem. He began in 1846 with the statement, "I fear five centuries and a half is all the antiquity we can allow to these boasted monuments of primeval times". Thirty years later he came to believe that the monuments should be dated to the fifth or sixth century, "if not indeed earlier". In 1880 he fixed upon the half century from 650 to 700.

In the revised edition of his "History of Indian and Eastern Architecture", published in 1910, Fergusson wrote, "We

can hardly escape the conclusion that Rajasimha, Atyantakama, Atiranachanda etc are all names (or 'birudas') of one king, the son and successor of Ugradanda-Lokaditya or Paramesvaravarman. His dedications are all Saiva and their occurrence on so many of the Mamallapuram shrines supports the testimony, previously founded on the style alone, that they belong to one time, and were all excavated within a short period about A. D. 670 to 700".

Fergusson had repeated this view in 1880 in the chapters he contributed to "The Cave Temples of India". He said that the year 700 AD was "a mean date about which the temples and sculptures at Mahavalipur were most probably executed. It may be 50 years earlier or later".

The point is not so much the actual decade as that all the monuments were created in one single reign. One reign alone in Pallava history satisfies the conditions, that of Rajasimha. Since Mr. R. Nagaswamy expressed this view in 1962,[44] it has been steadily gaining ground because it has been meticulously and persuasively argued. It is certainly time that the royal saint was given his due.

VII

THE ARTISTS

Mamallapuram, so eminently photogenic today, attracted the artist in the last two centuries. None of those who drew its monuments bulks as large in the history of this site as do Major Gill and Lady Herningham in that of Ajanta. Even so, a number of well graced artists fell under its spell. The monuments most popular with them were the Shore Temple, "Arjuna's Penance" and the Five Rathas. Another, not much regarded today, was found attractive: it was the Dolotsava Mandapa.

The British discovery of Mamallapuram happened to coincide with a revolutionary change in artistic taste in Britain.[45] Wordsworth and Coleridge, with some help from Southey, created the romantic revolt in literature. What would we not give for even a fragment by the "heaven-eyed creature" on Mamallapuram to match his fantasies of Xanadu and Kubla Khan.! In art the archangel of revolt was William Gilpin. His two books, "Tours" (1782-1809) and "Three Essays" (1792) were the "Lyrical Ballads" of this revolt.

Unlike the literary rebels, Gilpin was very practical. His instructions "were nothing if not systematic and provided lists of features to be included or omitted. He advised, for example, that in sketching landscape gnarled trees should be placed on either side, a Gothic ruin included in the off-skip, meadows inserted in the background, and that the foreground should contain creepers, stumps of blasted trees, stony banks, and rutted paths with shaggy animals and unkempt humans to add the requisite touch of life".

British art had emancipated itself from the rigid correctness of the past. It yearned for the unusual, the "exotic". It longed for wildness, extravagance in nature and man. William

Hodges, who painted in India from 1780 to 1783, one of his subjects being the Great Temple at Tanjore, asked "Why should we admire it (Greek art) in an exclusive manner and be blind to the majesty, boldness and magnificence of the Egyptian, Hindu, Moorish and Gothic as admirable wonders of architecture?".

An amateur painter was enthralled by the opportunities India offered. Lady Falkland, wife of a Governor of Bombay, wrote in 1848, "What bits to sketch! What effects here! What colouring there!".[46] Another painter said, "In the picturesque properties of the scene, how greatly does this Indian assemblage transcend our own! Instead of red rectangular buildings, square doors, square windows, formal lines of booths, and what is worse than all, the dark, dingy dress of the figures...... we have here domes, minarets, fanciful architecture, and a costume, above all, flaunting in colours, set off with weapons, and formed, from the easy flow of its drapery, to adorn beauty and disguise deformity......Every hut, equipage, utensil, and beast of India is picturesque".

"To recognise the picturesque and then to sketch it acquired the force of duty", writes Mrs. Mildred Archer in her history of the artistic activity of the period. Never before or since was India so much painted, drawn or aqua tinted. Practically every Briton who landed in Bombay seemed to hold a ledger or a sword in one hand and a palette in the other.

It was not long before professional British painters began to invade India About sixty of them arrived in the half century between 1770 and 1820. The earliest was Tilly Kettle who landed in Madras in 1769. The aim of these artists was to "explore the country and its people, to draw and sketch scenes and incidents that caught their eye, to complete oils and water colours, and then to return to England laden with these spoils. Some would sell their work while still in India, occasionally translating their drawings into aquatints or

engravings"

The most prominent of these artists were the Daniells, Home, Hodges, Salt, Smart, Kettle and Zoffany. There were also a few artists belonging to other European nations. In fact, what seems to be the first published drawing of Mamallapuram monuments is by Haafner, who has already been referred to.

Haafner was at Sadras between 1779 and 1781. He says that he visited Mamallapuram several times. Among his drawings are a general view of Mamallapuram from the sea and the Five Rathas. They appeared in his "Reise laengst der Kuste von Coromandel".

Haafner was followed by Thomas and William Daniell, uncle and nephew. These are the best known of the Mamallapuram artists. They sailed from England in 1785 and arrived in Calcutta after a visit to China. They spent eight years in India, from 1786 to 1794. They worked indefatigably penetrating into regions where no Europeans had gone before, drawing and sketching an infinite multitude of monuments, cities and men. They travelled huge distances "on foot, in palanquins in ox carts, and on horseback, in small boats along rivers and canals and by sea".

There is an engaging account of Thomas as Mrs Graham found him in a Sri Lanka village, "where he intended to stay some time in search of subjects for his pencil To defend himself from the bad effects of his sylvan life he smokes and lights great fires within and without his tent . He carried with him a contrivance called the "perambulator" with which he measured his progress on the road. It was "a large wheel trundled by a handle, with clockwork and dial recording the mileage".

After travelling extensively in northern India from

August 1788, till the end of 1791, incidentally failing to please the Nawab of Oudh, a patron of Hodges, the Daniells sailed from Calcutta on March 10, 1792, and arrived in Madras nineteen days later. A diary which William kept (it came to light only in 1931) describes how these artists travelled. It is worth transcribing a few of the entries to indicate how they must have journeyed to Mamallapuram, among other places.

The Daniell retinue may seem unduly large, but it was no larger than was the custom in those days when one hundred and fifty servants to wait on a single European were not unknown[47]. The Daniell retinue consisted of "2 Palankeens with II bearers to each; 4 Bearers for Bottle Khannah safe; 2 do. Bangies; 2 Coolies for ye Drawing Tables; 2 Do. for a Cot; I do fowls etc; a second Dubash; a mater; a Cook; 2 peons; 2 Lascars, Portuguese and a Mussulman Boy; 2 Horses, 2 Sises; a Cart and 4 Bullocks; 3 Bullocks for the Tent etc; four Bullock men".

The Daniells did much of their work at the 'Drawing Tables" on which they must have placed the "camera obscura", "a contraption in the shape of a box, one of its six sides being open and covered by a curtain. A reflector above the box projected the subject on to a sheet of paper or canvas placed flat on the basis of the box. The reflection could then be outlined in pencil". Many artists of the day used this contrivance.

There were two separate periods when the Daniells could have gone to Mamallapuram, no doubt followed by the formidable retinue They were in Madras for some time after their arrival before travelling to Bangalore. The third Mysore war with Tippu Sultan was then in progress, and they encountered many groups of soldiers on the way. They then travelled to Tiruchi, Madura and Cape Comorin before passing over to Sri Lanka They returned to Madras from the island towards the end of 1792 and remained there for three months They

could have visited Mamallapuram either during this period or soon after their first arrival in Madras. In any case, the Mamallapuram of their drawings dates to 1792-93. The Reverend Hobart Caunter could not have accompanied them.

The Daniells drew the Shore Temple, the "Sculptured Rock at Mauveleporam on the coast of Coromandel" (the Five Rathas), the "Entrance of an Excavated Hindoo Temple at Mauveleporam" (the Panchapandava temple and "Arjuna's Penance").

The next British artist who went to Mamallapuram of whom there is record was Henry Salt, already mentioned. He came to Mamallapuram in 1804 in the company of Lord Valentia whose secretary and draftsman he was. Some of his drawings were used to illustrate Valentia's book as well as his own, "Twenty-four Views taken in St. Helena, the Cape, India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia and Egypt", which appeared in 1809. One of his Mamallapuram drawings depicts the Mahishamardhani rock temple and the Olakkanesvara temple.

Robert Home visited Mamallapuram before 1808. He came out to point portraits at Madras, but the Nawab of Oudh invited him to Lucknow. There he prospered. He produced two oils of "Arjuna's Penance" and the Five Rathas.

Mrs. Graham's two books, "Journal" and "Letters", contain many engravings made from her drawings. Her sub ects were, apart from the inevitable Five Rathas and "Ar una's Penance", the Ganesa Ratha, the Dolotosava mandapa, the Varaha rock temple and two of its sculptures and the western Sive shrine in the Shore Temple showing the Somaskanda.

About 1820 an artist named Gantz drew some of the Mamallapuram monuments. There is a water colour of "Arjuna's Penance" and the two monuments nearly. It is not clear whether this was the work of the father John or the son Justinian.

Braddock whose guide to the monuments has been referred to, added to it a pleasing sketch of his own of the Five Rathas.

About forty years later Edward Lear, known today as the writer of the nonsense limericks though his ambition was to excel as a landscape artist, arrived in Mamallapuram on the night of August 24, 1874. He had come to India at the invitation of his friend, Lord Northbrook, the Viceroy. Lear was then sixty-four years old and somewhat of an invalid. His "Indian Journal" shows that he could not make up his mind whether or not he liked India.

His journey from Madras by the Buckingham Canal wearied and irritated Lear. His first impulse on arriving at Mamallapuram was to return. "The temples······seem picturesque, but it is no use to think of drawing them in this weather (it was raining), and I fancy the best thing will be to go back at once". But a cup of tea soothed him, and he was prepared to concede that "the grandeur and lonely beauty of these strange antiquities almost overpay the beastly bore of reaching them."[48]

Lear made twenty drawings at Mamallapuram. They include those of the Shore Temple and the Five Rathas He wrorte of the Shore Temple "the great solitary pagoda by the sea", that it is "a subject as interesting as any I have drawn in any land". The Five Rathas were "very strange and curious". The sculptures struck him as "very astonishing, wonderful".

Lear's valedictory note is "The poetical character of this remarkably beautiful and interesting place is of a higher order than that of any I have yet seen in India, being so unique and ancient".

Notes and References

NOTES AND REFERENCES

PART I

1. 'The Parthians revolted from the Seleucidae about B. C. 150 under a chief named Arsakes (Askh), who founded an independent monarchy. The Parthians subsequently overran the provinces east of the Euphrates.... Led by Artaxerxes (Ardashir), they (the Persians) put an end to the Parthian kingdom of Arsacidae, after it had lasted 476 years, and established the Persian dynasty of the Sassanidae, A. D. 226'-'Mysore' Vol. I, by Lewis Rice, pp. 303-4. The Pallavas 'may possibly be derived from Parthava (Parthian).

2. The view that Vikramaditya II, who captured Kanchipuram from Nandivarman Pallavamalla, invited or took with him to his capital, Pattadakkal, Pallava artists to build the Virupaksha temple is based on two inscriptions in that temple, one of which describes its builder as 'the most eminent sutradhari of the southern country' and the other eulogises a sculptor, Chattara-Revadi Ovajja, said to be one who 'made the southern country'. Vikramaditya's inscription at the Kailasanatha temple says that he made large gifts to it. According to the Vakkaleri grant of his son Kirtivarman II, Vikramaditya made donations to the temple and was so impressed by it that he had the images overlaid with gold.

The Rashtrakutas reproduced many features of the Virupaksha temple in the Kailasa at Ellora This has supplied a model for the Kazhugumalai rock temple.

3 The only monuments of Asoka that have survived are his magnificent columns. These are made of many kinds of stone. The Thuparama dagaba, the first work of its kind to be constructed in Sri Lanka, enshrines Buddha's collar bone. "Extremely graceful stone pillars with ornamental capitals, but with no bases, were fixed in the courtyard in four concentric circles round the dagaba"-"Anuradhapura" by J. M. Senaveratna, p. 17.

4. The Ikshvakus ruled from Nagarjunakonda for about a hundred years from the second quarter of the third century A. D. The early Badami Chalukyan temples at Mahakuta, which was the cradle of that school, belong to about the end of the sixth century.

5 The story, related of Pusalar Nayanar, occurs in Sekkizhar's 'Periyapuranam. Pusalar, 'not finding the wealth required for building a temple', erected one 'in his own heart'. He 'gathered all the wealth in his own heart and, choosing a day for laying the foundation stone, he began the edifice and it slowly rose day after day. The foundations, the building, the top and the stupi were all finished, and then the prakarams with the walls and tank and well etc. were also completed, and the day approached for the final consecration and abisheka'.

Sekkizhar relates that about this time a king of the Pallavas had begun buidling a temple at Kachchi and 'expended all his vast wealth on its construction'. The night prior to its consecration the Lord appeared to the king in a dream and told him to defer the consecration as He was to enter Pusalar's temple the next day.

'The King came to Thiruninravur the next day to bow before the holy man whose service was acceptable to God. He asked the people where the temple was. They told him that there was none. He assembled the Brahmins and wanted to know who Pusalar was, but he was not there and they said that he was a holy Brahmin of that place. The king felt it would be disrespectful to send for him and so himself approached our Saint's abode and prostrating himself before him, told him that under the orders of God he had come there to visit the shrine built by him . . . Our saint was considerably bewildered and felt how great was God's grace to his poor self and told the king all the details of his construction of a temple in his own heart The king, on hearing this, felt how great was the saint and after praising and bowing before him he went back to his capital' These passages are taken from the English translation by J. M. Nallaswamy Pillai (pp. 129-30).

Some scholars believe that Rajasimha has been canonised as Aiyadigal Kadavarkon Nayanar. Sekkizhar says of this saint that he belonged to the ancient Pallava dynasty and reigned at Kanchi. He conquered all his enemies and was also a great patron of letters, both Sanskrit and Tamil and what was more, he was himself a poet. He was a great devotee of God and soon became convinced that sovereignty was a great curse and so undertook a pilgrimage to all the shrines of God. In each shrine he visited he composed a verse in the Venba metre, in each of which he points out the transitoriness of existence, its joys and triumphs, and appeals to a higher life and to the need for worshipping God in truth and love. (Nallaswamy Pillai, p. 117) Whether this agrees with what is known of Rajasimha's life is doubtful.

6. Commenting on the passage in Beal's life of Huen-tsang, 'The city of Kanchipuram is situated on the south (bay) of the southern sea of India, look-

ing towards the kingdom of Simhala, distant from it three days voyage', Minakshi says that it has induced some scholars to describe Kanchi as a seaport (Watters, "Yuan Chwang" p. 227 Chhabra's 'Expansion of Indo-Aryan Culture during Pallava rule' p. 5; Cunningham's 'Ancient Geography' p. 738). Minakshi adds that there is a strong tradition in South India that in ancient days Kanchi and Mamallapuram were connected by a long canal'. ('Administration and Social Life under the Pallavas p. 68) But, T. N. Subramaniam says, 'I am unable to trace any authority for this tradition.' ('The Pallavas of Kanchi in South-East Asia,' p.124).

7. The Kasakkudi plates ('South Indian Inscriptions,' Vol. II) say that Mahendra I won a victory at Pullalura against his 'chief enemies'. On September 10, 1780 during the second Mysore war, Hyder Ali "intercepted and destroyed at Polilur a detachment marching under Colonel Baillie from the northward to join General Munro who had concentrated his forces at Kanchipuram". The next year, on August, 7, Eyre Coote defeated Hyder Ali at Polilur (Cambridge History of India, Vol. V. pp. 283, 284). Baillie's defeat is illustrated on the walls of Tippu Sultan's palace, Daria Daulat at Seringapatam.

8. Considerable confusion has been caused about the identification of the 'Mulasthana' at Tirukkazhukunram by the statement of the earlier epigraphical scholars that the inscription of Aditya I is to be found on the wall of the strong room of the Vedagirisvara temple which is at the top of the hill. Actually, the inscription is on the apsidal structure, near the shrine of the Goddess on the one hand and the pillared hall telling the Suraguru story in pillar sculpture on the other, in the Bhaktavatsala temple at the foot of the hill.

This inscription says, "In the twenty-seventh year of (the reign of) Ko-Rajaskesarivarman. Whereas Skandasishyan had given (some land) free from taxes to Sri Mulasthanattupperumanadigal of Tirukkarukkunram in Tankuru (a sub division) of Kallattur Kottam, (and) accordingly Vatapikonda-Narasimhappottaraiyar maintained (the grant) in that manner, I Rajakesarivarman, at the request of Puttan, the son of Gunavan (and) lord of the adjoining shore, preserved (the grant) as former kings had kept it". ("Epigraphia Indica", Vol. III. pp. 277-80)

Narasimha I's own inscription recording a gift to the Perumanadigal of the 'Mulasthana' occurs in the Orukal mandapa a little below the Vedagirisvara temple at Tirukkazhukunram, 'South Indian Inscriptions', Vol. XII, no, 16.

9. 'South Indian Inscriptions,' Vol II.

10. See 'Early Chola Art', Part I, by S. R. Balasubramaniam, pp. 220-228 and pp. 248-251, with a note by R. Nagaswamy pp. 251-252.

11. Both from the Vedagirisvara temple at the top of the hill and from the Orukal mandapa a little below it is possible to see the Bay of Bengal dashing itself against the shore. At night the lighthouse serves as a beacon.

12. The antiquities discovered at Vasavasamudram included 'conical storage jars in large numbers, but in broken condition. Some large size bricks, two pieces of imported rouletted ware and potsherds, and a neck portion of an amphora of Mediterranean origin were also found'. 'Damilica', Vol. I, part II, p .48

13. 'The carving of the monoliths appears to have continued for two generations after Mamalla through the reigns of Mahendravarman II (668–672) and Paramesvaravarman I (672–700) when perhaps the sculptures of the principal deities, in bas relief, as extant in some of the central shrines, were introduced'. ('The Pallava Architecture of South India,' in Ancient India, No. 14, 1958, by K R. Srinivasan, p. 128)

14. Two Mamallapuram sculptures illustrate this, one in the Draupadi ratha and the other in the Varaha temple.

15. 'Periyapuranam' says that after Mahendra became a Hindu he destroyed the Jaina monastery at Pataliputra (Tiruppapuliyur, now a part of Cuddalore New Town) and with the materials built a Siva temple at Tiruvadigai, now near Panruti, a few miles from Cuddalore. This implies that there was a structural temple in Mahendra's reign many years before what are generally belived to be the first in the Tamil region, those built in the reign of Paramesvara I, were erected. The Tiruvadigait temple is called Gunadharaviccuram, or the temple of Gunadhara. Mahendra had a honorific 'Gunabhara ' The Tiruvadigai temple has been often reconstructed, once in Pallava times. If the structural temple at Tiruvadigai, which must have been of stone (because nobody would bother to cart brick debris to the site), was originally built by Mahendra, Mandagappattu was not his first religious creation. Very little has survived of the Gunadharaviccuram today.

16. 'South Indian Inscriptions', Vol. I, p 6.

17. In the Kanchi Kailasanatha temple. 'South Indian Inscriptions', Vol. I, p. 13.

18. For example, 'Srivadyavidyadhara', 'Sri Atodhya Tumburu', and 'Sri Vina Narada' among the label epigraphs in the Kailasanatha temple.

19. This inscription ('Epigraphia Indica,' Vol. XVIII) states that Rajasimha was well known to his subjects as 'Mahamalla'.

20. The Trimurthi rock temple is a form of ratha because its makers have evidently reproduced an oblong temple or, in the alternative, a string of three shrine fronts. There were oblong mandapas in some of the Nagarjunakonda temples.

21. Jouveau Dubreuil, Venkayya and Longhurst, for example. Venkayya wrote (Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India's 1906-07, p. 234), it is not unlikely that Mahabalipuram was founded by the Pallava king Narasimha Varman.' According to Dubreuil, 'it is almost certain that Mamallapuram was founded by Mamalla or Malla, that is to say by Narasimha Varman I.' ('Pallava Antiquities', Vol. I, p. 62) and 'This town did not probably exist before the time of Narasimha Varman. It is this king that founded it and gave it the name of Mahamallapuram after his own name of Mamalla' ('Pallavas', p. 41).

22. 'Mysore Archaeological Report', 1939, No. 300.

23. 'South Indian Inscriptions' Vol. I, p. 144.

24. 'South Indian Inscriptions', Vol. XI

25. 'Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy,' 1909, pp. 76-77

26. Siruttondar, verse 6, in 'Periyapuranam'.

27. 'South Indian Inscriptions,', Vol I, p. 13.

28. Ibid. p. 22.

29. His first opinion occure in an article, 'On the Rock cut Temples of India' in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain'. In 1876 he changed his view, as stated, in 'A History of Indian and Eastern Architecture'. His final dating occurs in The Cave Temples of India' 1880.

30. Though he does refer to the excavated shrines at Mamallapuram in the chapter on the Dravidian style in his 'History of Indian and Eastern Architecture', Fergusson understands by rock temples mainly the rathas.

31 Four may, in fact, be counted, going by epigraphical and literary evidence. They were the Gunadarviccurram of Mahendra I, the Kuram temple, and *those at Kelambakkam and Sirrambakkam, the last three of Paramesvara* I. The 'Mulasthana' at Tirukkazhukunram is now represented by the apsidal building in the Bhaktavatsala temple.

32. These are at Mandagappattu, Pallavaram, Mamandur (four), Kuranganilmuttam, Vallam (three), Mahendravadi, Dalavanur, Tiruchi, Siyamangalam, Vilappakkam, Aragandanallur, Tirukkazhukunram, Singaperumal-

koil, Singavaram, Melacheri, and Kilmavilangai. To this list may be added the rock temples at Narttamalai and Malayadipatti posterior to Mamallapuram.

33. 'An important compositional feature of the free-standing monoliths of Mamallapuram is that almost all the series show the hara of karnakutas and bhadra salas in each of the talas, including the topmost. The significant modification of this rule is the ending of the last tala of the vimana with a kapota and prastara above but without the 'ksudra alpa sikhara above them in their respective places along the periphery of that 'tala'. This latter (the modification) became the norm in all the structural temples of the post-Mamalla period which further show a secondary variation by replacing the 'hara' of miniature 'sikharas' by the nandis placed in the corner' 'Rajasimha's temples in Tondaimandalam' by K. V. Soundararajan in 'Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India", 1962-65, p. 173-174.

'Another feature was the dropping of the hara in almost all Rajasimha temples around the lowest tala as well except on the mukhamandapa roof' Ibid. p. 176.

34. Images of Ganesa and Jyeshtadevi are not common in early Pallava sculpture. 'It is only in the later Pallava structural temples coeval with the Muttaraiyar and Pandya cave temples that Ganesa is found and even there as one of the deities of the Saptamatrikas group or as one of the subsidiary deities in the ardha mandapa.'-'Cave Temples of the Pallavas'by K R. Srinivasan, p. 64

35. 'The Authorship of Mahabalipuram's Monuments in 'Mahabalipuram studies' by M. Lockwood and C Siromoney, 1975.

36. 'New Light on Mamallapuram' by R. Nagaswamy, 1962.

37. On the Brahma shrine.

38. R. Nagaswamy's monograph in 'Artibus Asiae' 1964.

39. There are fairly full accounts in Nilakanta Sastri and K. K. Pillay.

40 Vikramamahendra, Mahendra's maternal grandfather, who ruled over the south Andhra region.

41. That its medium influences art is a truism. But it is going too far to assert that the royal patrons made a choice as between different types of stone. This would make scientific geologists of the kings or their artists. They must have had an instinctive appreciation of the qualities of particular stones. But nothing more can be safelv asserted.

42. 'The growth and stabilisation ot Pallava power in the seventh century under Mahendravarman and Narasimhavarman I synchronised with the expansion of the Calukyas of Vatapi under Pulakesin II and marked the beginnings of one of the most persistent lines of conflict in South Indian History–'Kanchipuram in South Indian History' by T. V. Mahalingam, p. 65.

43. From the fact that Simhavarman, who claims Pallava ancestry, made gifts to the Amaravati stupa in, as deduced from the palaeography of his inscription, about the eleventh–twelfth century ('South Indian Inscriptions; Vol. I, pp. 26-27) it may be inferred that this great monument was in existence in the eighth century. Sivaramamurthi, says that the epigraph is in characters of about 1100 AD ('Amaravati Sculptures,' p.285)

44. For example, 'Damila Kanha (that is, Krishna from the Tamil region), his brother Cula Kanha and his sister Nakha donated an upright slab, at the foot of the great çaitya of Dhana' (or Dhanyakataka), 'Amaravati Sculptures in the Madras Government Museum' by C. Sivaramamurthi, p. 281.

45. Details in 'Nagarjunakonda' by H. Sarkar and B. N. Misra. pp. 24–29.

46. Op. cit. p. 29, 'An oblong temple at site 84, with a mandapa in front, must have been in use even after the Ikshvakus, for one of its mandapa pillars bore pilgrim's records in characters of the seventh century.'

47. In common with other monuments of ancient and mediaeval India the temples of Mamallapuram must have been extensively painted. All that remains today are faint traces on the image of Lord Varaha in the Adivaraha temple and on the back wall of the sanctum in the Arjuna ratha. In the last century Carr said in a footnote to Babington's article that in the Varaha temple 'the ceiling is painted.'

48 'Early Temple Architecture in Karnataka and its Ramifications' by K. V. Soundara Rajan, p. 16.

49. The first Indian rock excavations were made in the reigns of Asoka Maurya and his grandson, Dasaratha, in the Barabar and Nagarjuni hills, in Bihar.

50: 'South Indian Inicriptions,' Vol. I, pp. 2–4.

51. But it is urged against this view that these figures are semi-divine beings because they wear Karanda makutas similar to those worn by the Vidyadaras in 'Arjuna's Penance' and because all the males wear the sacred thread thrown over the right arm in the mode followed in all Pallava sculptures of Gods and demi-Gods 'Marg,' Vol. XXIII, No. 4,, by T. N. Ramachandran, p. 101.

52. Some decades ago there was in the shrine a head crowned by the Trisula. It may have stood on the roof of the Bhima ratha nearby and fallen down. Op. cit, p. 102

53. 'The Cave Temples of India' by Fergusson and Burgess, 1969, p.119 This chapter was written by Fergusson.

54. Çavally Lakshmiah in Carr's 'The Seven Pagodas.'

55. Three finials are displayed near the Pandava rathas today, affixed with cement to the platforms. They must have been recovered from the drift sand in the excavations by Longhurst and others.

56. Lakshmiah, writing in 1803, says that the linga in the Arjuna ratha was carried off by Bu--' Carr says that, according to a local resident, it was Lord Hobart, Governor of Madras from September 1794 to February 1798, that took away the linga as well as an image of Hanuman. Lady Hobart gave the villagers twenty pagodas in recompense. This must be an early instance of the process that is now continuing whereby this country is being denuded of its religious and artistic treasures.

57. T. N. Ramachandran's 'The Kiratarjuniyam or Arjuna's Penance in Indian Art' has decisively settled the problem of identification in favour of the Arjuna epsiode.

58. The Mahabharatha story appears in 'Arjunabhigammana parva,' 'Kairata parva', and 'Indralokagammana parva' in the 'Vana parva.'

59. At Vijayawada a sculptured pillar on the Indrakiladri hill carries ten panels and an inscription. The epigraph, ascribed to the ninth century, records that Trikoti Boyi set up the pillar as a memorial of his own name in order to secure merit for his race. Trikoti Boyi is said in the epigraph to be an incarnation of the yakshas who, not in the Mahabharatha story, but in that of Bharavi, guided Arjuna to the Indrakiladri hill, in the Himalayas, to perform his penance in. The sculptures follow the versions of both epic and poem.

At Srisailam the relief illustrating the episode occurs on the outer side of the prakara walls of the celebrated Mallikarjuna temple. It emphasises the kirata aspect of the story. At Lepakshi, the paintings depicting the story on the ceiling of the mandapa are of surpassing artistry. 'The painters .... had an excellent sense of form and pose. The lines have been drawn in sure and unswering strokes.' The version mostly follows Bharavi's.

There are also illustrations of the story at Yaganti (eight miles from Banganapalle), Pushpagiri (a site of exceptional interest, but little studied),

Chidambaram and Tiruvetkalam (near Chidambaram) among other sites in southern India.

60 The second 'Arjuna's Penance' at Mamallpuaram bears the marks of being an imitation, not an anticipation. Apart from the differences in details, its art certainly cannot be compared with that of the great bas relief to its north.

61. The Bhagavatha says, 'Uprooting the Govardhana mountain with a single hand, Lord Krishna held it up as a boy might a mushroom. The cowherds then entered the hollow beneath the mountain with all their possessions and people. Looked at (by all), Krishna held up the mountain for seven days and did not move from the place. Wonderstruck on seeing the greatness of the power of Krishna, Indra, with his pride gone and resolve fallen, withdrew his clouds.'

62, The sculptures on this horse court are bold and vigorous, but of little subtlety. This style, of course, is in keeping with its theme of cavalry going forth to war. This mandapa presents a striking appearance. S. R. Balasubramaniam believes that the temple was built in the thirteenth century in the reign of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya. This king's foundation inscription in his ninth regnal year (he came to the throne in 1251) occurs at the entrance of the second 'prakara.'

63. The only Pallava rock excavations after those of Rajasimha are at Narttamalai and Malayadipatti. Incidentally, there is in the structural Siva temple at Malayadipatti a version of Durga fighting Mahishasura as in the Mahishamardhani temple. Somewhat smaller than the Mamallapuram master piece, it is located opposite to the sanctum. There is another version in the Nagesvara temple in Kumbakonam. Ellora, ofcourse, contains a great classic.

64. There are eight model vimanas at Mamallapuram, one in 'Arjuna's Penance,' two on the facade of the Ramanuja mandapa, one on the Sahadeva ratha, and two each on the Bhima and Ganesa rathas. This fact reinforces the impression that Mamallapuram was also a kind of open air school of art.

65. The stories of Goddess Durga's destruction of the Mahisha demon and the cosmic sleep of Lord Vishnu are told in two consecutive cantos of the 'Markandeya Purana.' Pargiter assigns the purana to the fourth century A. D. But the two cantos, together known popularly as Devi Mahatmya, are thought to be an interpolation of a later period.

The first story is that Goddess Sakti assumed the role of Yoganidra (that is, the inducer of contemplative sleep) and made Lord Vishnu at the end of an aeon, enter the state of half sleep, half contemplation. Lord Vishnu is threa-

tened by two demons, Madhu and Kaitabha. Lord Brahma thereupon prays to Goddess Sakti to withdraw Lord Vishnu from His state so that He could destroy the demons, "Oh, Goddess, bewitch these invincible demons, Madhu and Kaitabha, with Thy great powers, and let the imperishable master of the world be lightly brought back to consciousness and let him rouse up his intelligence to slay these two great demons.' Thereupon, the Goddess 'issued forth from Lord Vishnu's eyes, mouth, nose, arms, heart and breast, and stood in the sight of Brahma whose birth was inscrutable. Janardhana, the master of the world, having been left by her, rose up from his couch in the universal ocean and destroyed the demons.'

The second story is that in a great battle the demons defeated the Devas and expelled them from heaven. The demon king, Mahisha, became supreme. It became necessary to destroy him. A light, representing inherent energy, issued from each God. Together they became one luminous body, which took the form of a damsel. She received weapons from the Gods, the trident from Lord Siva, the discus from Lord Vishnu, the conch from Varuna, a bow and arrow from the Maruts, and other weapons from the others. After a stern battle she slew the demon.

66. The story of Bali, as related in the Bhagavata, is that Bali the king of the demons, was once worsted by Indra. Determined to avenge this defeat, Bali sought the help of the Bhrigus, his preceptors. They performed for him the 'world conquering' Visvajit sacrifice. From the sacrificial fire there arose a celestial bow and armour. With their help, Bali besieged the 'highly prosperous city of Indra.' Indra sought the advice of Brihaspati, who said that Lord Hari alone could defeat Bali and that the Devas should abandon heaven. Bali established himself in their city.

Aditi, the mother of the Gods, was stricken with grief. Kasyapa, her husband, advised her to worship Lord Hari. The Lord told her that He would help her and restore her sons to heaven. He incarnated himself as a dwarf Brahmachari. One day he went to Bali's court where that king was performing horse sacrifices. Bali told him that he could 'take from me whatever you desire . . . land, gold, a clean and excellent house, food and drink or a maiden. Take whatever you desire.'

The pretended dwarf asked for nothing more than "a little bit of land, three feet measured by my feet". Bali told him that he was an unwise person who asked for three feet of ground from one who would give away a continent. But the dwarf asked for only three feet of ground. Smilingly, Bali granted the request.

Before Bali could ratify the promise of the gift, Sukra, his preceptor, warned him that the mendicant was, in fact, Lord Vishnu, who would destroy him. But

Bali refused to retract his promise, he having given his word. After Bali ratified the promise the Lord 'bestrode (the whole of) Bali's earth with one foot and (pervaded) the skies with His arms. For Him who bestrode the heaven with the second foot there was not even an atom belonging to Bali for his third'. The Lord then asked for space for the third foot. Bali offered his head. Pleased with this, as Bali went to the nether world, the Lord told him, ' I shall be protecting you from everything. You shall be seeing Me for all time".

67. The two royal groups have been identified with every pair of father and son from Mahendra I to Narasimha II,

68. At the back of the third niche to the right of the front entrance of the shrine of Mahendravarmesvara.

69. It has ben suggested that the Tiger's cave has acoustic properties and that it was excavated as a kind of music chamber. A few concerts were held there in 1973. The concept is in keeping with Rajasimha's love of the unusual.

70. Happy times because there was then little or no sectarian feeling among the Hindus. That is why a Vaishnavaite like Nandivarman Pallavamalla could bear the name of Parmesvara and also why the imprecatory Saiva verse appears in the Vaishnavaite temple of the Adivaraha.

71. Only a few of these sculptures are now in place, obviously the small remnants of a large number.

72. The colonists of Takuapa were subjects of Nandivarman III, a cognomen of whom Avani Narayan (which occurs in 'Nandikkalambagam') they applied to a tank. Nangur has been identified with a village in Tanjore district, and the colonists were more likely to have sailed from Puhar than from Mamallapuram. But there must have been many other emigrants, of whom history has no record, who passed through Mamallapuram on their way to a new life.

73. It is believed that the shining white of the Buddhist stupa at Salihundam, in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh, served as a kind of beacon for sailors. The lighted lampstand at Mamallapuram would have been seen by ships departing at night.

74. There are a few isolated rock sculptures in Mamallapuram. That near the Shore Temple is a vigorous carving.

75. 'Mahabalipuram. Its Religious Importance ' by D. Ramaswamy Iyangar, p. 8.

76. Braddock, writing in 1844, says so.

PART II

1. 'Peria Tirumozhi,' 2-6-6.

2. 'Notes on the Ruins at Mahabalipuram on the Coromandel Coast,' in 'Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal,' Vol. XXII, 1854. Included in Carr.

3. There are extracts from Strabo, Pliny and 'The Periplus' in 'Foreign Notices of South India,' by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri. The introduction is valuable.

4. 'Foreign Notices,' p. 58.

5. The choice lies between Markanam and Sadras. T. N. Subramaniam argues convincingly ('The Pallavas of Kanchi in South-East Asia,' p. 121-133) in favour of Sadras.

6. 'Si-yu-ki,' or Buddhist Records of the Western World,' by Samue. Beal, Vol. I, p. 228.

7. 'Epigraphia Indica,' Vol. XVII, p 145

8. T N. Subramaniam, op. cit.

9. For the identification of Nirppeyarru see the discussion in T. N. Subramaniam, op. cit., pp. 125-126.

10. 'Mahabalipuram, Its Religious Importance' by D. Ramaswamy Iyangar, p. 8.

11 'A notable contemporary of Nandivarman (Pallavamalla) was the Vaishnava saint Tirumangai Alvar who has sung several verses on the Vaikuntap perumal temple.'-'Kanchipuram in South Indian History,' by T. V. Mahalingam. p. 185.

12. D. Ramaswamy Iyangar, op cit; p. 6.

13. Carr gives a full English translation of the 'Sthalapurana.' A summary appears in 'South Indian Shrines' by P. V. Jagadisa Ayyar, pp. 163-170, and D. Ramaswamy Iyangar, op. cit. pp. 2-5. 'South India Shrines' also gives the 'sthalapurana' of the Bhaktavatsala temple at Tirukkazhukunram.

14. The Pallava expeditions to Sri Lanka are described in the 'Mahavamsa', translated by Turner and Wijesinha, Ch. XLVIII. See also 'Notes on the Seven Pagodas' by R. Gopalan, p. 17.

15, The story of Avanti Sundari is associated with the image of Lord Vishnu in the Shore Temple. When Dandin and his friends were conversing with Lalitalaya after they had failed to find any signs of mending in an arm of the image, 'they saw a big red lotus floating over the sea and moving slowly towards the image. It touched the feet of the image and suddenly turned into a Vidyadhara equipped with arms and ornaments. When Dandin and his friends were looking aghast, the Vidyadhara went round the image, made obeisance to the deity and vanished in the sky. (Ramasarman), one of the party and a native of the Chola country, asked Dandin if he could unravel the mystery. 'Yes, it is a mystery,' said Dandin. 'This much, however, can be imagined; a celestial being offended a sage in an incident connected with flowers and the angry sage cursed him to change into a lotus flower; and the flower, having floated over the sea for long ages, recovered its original form at the touch of the image.

The story continues, 'Filled with wonder, the party returned to Kanchi, and Dandin's friends pressed him to unravel the mystery. Then Dandin observed a course of austerities lasting many days and worshipped Vishnu with intense devotion, sleeping on a bed of kusa grass (on a twelfth lunar day). The Goddess of learning appeared in his dream and said; Dear child, God Vishnu is pleased with you. May the story (of Rajavahana, the lord of men and semi-divine beings) shine bright with you (the story bristling with anecdotes on the aims of life, tales of distant islands, description of arts and creeds, and traditions of ancient kings, gods and demons)'.

'The day dawned. With a thrill of joy Dandin awoke early in the morning (and attended to his religious duties with meticulous attention). He then summoned his friends who were fond of hearing tales and narrated the story of Avantisundari (ending with the lotus changing into a Vidyadhara.)' — 'Avantisundari Kathasara' edited by G. Harihara Sastri.

The story contains some historical elements. In a temple was "carved on the wall the image of child Guha playing near his parents,' obviously a Somaskanda There is a reference to Vyaghragrama in the Chola country, which is Chidambaram. There are lists of kings of Magadha, given in a spirit of prophecy as in the puranas.

There are references to the commercial and colonising activites from the east coast of India to the Far East. These references are very interesting. One of the characters in the story is once shipwrecked and he manages to reach the island of Kalyavana or Yavana. There he marries the

daughter of a rich merchant and is elected king of the island by the merchant guild. When he sails home with his wife in ships loaded with valuables, the vessels sink in the ocean. His wife reaches the Kalinga coast, but he ultimately goes to Bali.

Another merchant lands at Andhakaccha, near the Mahendra forest, with rich merchandise after a voyage over Mahodadhi (the Bay of Bengal). He makes many 'Siddhayatras', or successful sea voyages, seeking wealth from Dramilappattana and goes to Pataliputra to offer for sale valuable jewels to Chandragupta Maurya. The emperor addresses him as "Yavana yatrika." Dramilappatana is Puhar.

Sudraka, whose life Lalitalaya wrote in Tamil, was perhaps a legendary person. History does not know of him. He 'captured men's minds by writing a book on his own life' which was eventful enough. He fought Svati, a prince of the Andhra dynasty, but later reinstated him in his father's kingdom. He captured Ujjain. One of the characters in his story is Rangapataka.

Altogether the two Avantisundari stories repay the historian for a close study, fiction though they are.

16. This reference to the skill of the Yavanas will gratify the many European scholars of an earlier time, who held that anything good in Indian art was due to the Greeks. They considered the Gandhara sculptures the zenith of Indian achievement simply because they are in a half-Greek style. But these are only a provincial idiom.

17. Edited by N. Ramesan in 'Mediaeval History of Deccan.'

18. 'Foreign Notices of South India,' pp. 116–117.

19. Op. cit. p. 17–18.

20. 'The Pallavas of Kanchi in South-East Asia.' pp. 115–120

21. 'Epigraphia Indica,' Vol. III. pp. 282–286.

22. 'South Indian Inscriptions,', Vol III, p. 75.

23. 'A History of South India,' by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, p. 299. For the Velugotti family in Mamallapuram; see Sewell's 'Topography' Vol. I, p. 192.

24. The catalogue of the Mackenzie manuscripts edited by H. H. Wilson and published in 1882 is virtually impossible to obtain today. But Dr. T. V. Mahalingam has published a summary of the manuscripts.

25. 'Topographical Inscriptions of the Madras Presidency,' edited by V. Rangachary, Vol. I, p 324.

26. 'History of Gingee' by C. S. Srinivasachari, p. 110.

27. There is an account of Valentijn's description of the Coromandal coast in an article by S. Arasaratnam in the Prof. K. A. N. Sastri Felicitation Volume, pp. 1-8.

28. 'Elihu Yale' by H. Bingham p. 55.

29. 'Storia do Mogor,' translated by W. Irvine, Vol. I, p. 154-155.

30. 'Madras in the Olden Times' edited by J. T. Wheeler, p, 416. Boddam's attempt is in 'Vestiges of Old Madras' by H. D. Love, Vol II, p. 206.

31. Alexander Hamilton's book is 'A New Account of the East Indies.' published in Edinburgh in 1727.

32. 'A History of the City of Madras,' by C. S. Srinivasachari, pp. 158-159.

33. Sonnerat's book was translated into English by Francis Magus as 'A Voyage to the East-Indies and China; Performed by Order of Lewis XV between the years 1774 and 1781.' It was published in Calcutta in 1788.

34. The stupa at Ghantasala was located there because, as with most other Andhra stupas, a sea or a river was close by. Salihundam, in Srikakulam district, stood a few miles from Kalingpatnam, fully visible from the sea, standing as it did on a hill. The Vamsadhara also flows nearby. Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda, of course, are on the Krishna. While the sea has not receded at Salihundam, it has at Ghantasala. The truth is that the eastern coast seems to have receded in some places, and advanced in some others, and remained without change at still other places.

35. No purpose is served by continuing to indulge in speculations on this topic which, after all, is little relevant either to the art or the history of Mamallapuram. The numerous attempts to make up the number of seven are marked only by ingenuity or fertility of invention.

36. The full title of his book, unusually long even for his times, is 'A Voyage to the East Indies; containing an Account of the Manners, Customs, etc; of the Natives, with a Geographical description of the Country. Collected from Observations made during a Residence of thirteen years in Districts little frequented by the Europeans'.

37. The Shore Temple could hardly have had six prakaras, formed by seven prakara walls. From the fact that Lakshmayya says that within the second wall is located the image of Lord Anantasayi it may perhaps be assumed that Lakshmayya counted up the lateral and sideral walls in the temple.

38. Strangely enough at 'Kalipakam' is now located an atom power station.

39. 'The Cave Temples of India.' p. 106'

40. Gubbins' article, 'Note son the Ruins at Mahabalipuram on the Coromandal Coast', appeared in the 'Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal', Calcutta.

41. It really does seem strange that little attention should have been paid by scholars to the hill 'gopura' which is magnificent even in its incompleteness. It is a grand and bold building, which had it been completed, would have supported a tremendous tower, like one of the great structures at Chidambaram, Madura or Tiruvannamalai.

42. 'Descriptive remarks on the Seven Pagodas' in 'The Madras Journal of Literature and Science for the year 1880'.

43. The Pallavas of Kanchi in South-East Asia,' p. 125.-

44. 'New light on Mamallapuram,' in 'Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India,' 1968, Mr. Nagaswamy's view, considered revolutionary at the time, is gaining ground among scholars. It gave bold expression to the half formed or vaguely felt objections of many old scholars to the theory that could so facilely apportion a monument storey by storey to various kings who ruled within a short period of each other. I have seen only one attempt to rebut its argument so far and that attempt, as I have stated elsewhere in this book, seems to me to be unconvincing because its approach is rather narrow.

45. 'Indian Painting for the British,' p. 9.

46. Op. cit. p. 4 The other passage on the same page appears on p. 9.

47. When, a few years after the Daniells, Lord Valentia travelled about India, his retinue consisted of 280 men, made up as follows; ' My own servant and Gopinath, 39 bearers, 16 jemmadars, hircarrahs etc, 6 kitmutgars, 2 seises, 16 for cooking and taking care of sheep etc, 50 of his Excellency's servants with the tents and hakerys, 10 with the elephants, 14 bearers of Mr. Webb and other servants, 14 servants of Gopinath and bearers, 120 sepoys and followers.' 'Mr. Webb' was a young army officer in command of a company of 'the 10th Native Regiment.' 'His Excellency' was the

Nawab of Oudh.

In 1810 an army officer, Captain John Seely, travelled from Bombay to Ellora. What he calls his 'cavalcade' consisted of 'three bullocks to carry a tent, twelve feet square, consisting of inner shell and outer fly, and two walls; three bullocks for clothes, provisions, books etc; two porters for camp-cot and writing desk; one ditto for breakfast utensils etc; one tattoo, or pony, for head servant; two ditto belonging to my servants, of whom I had four with me. There was an escort of six Siphauees and a corporal'.

48. 'Edward Lear's Indian Journal,' edited by R. Murphy.

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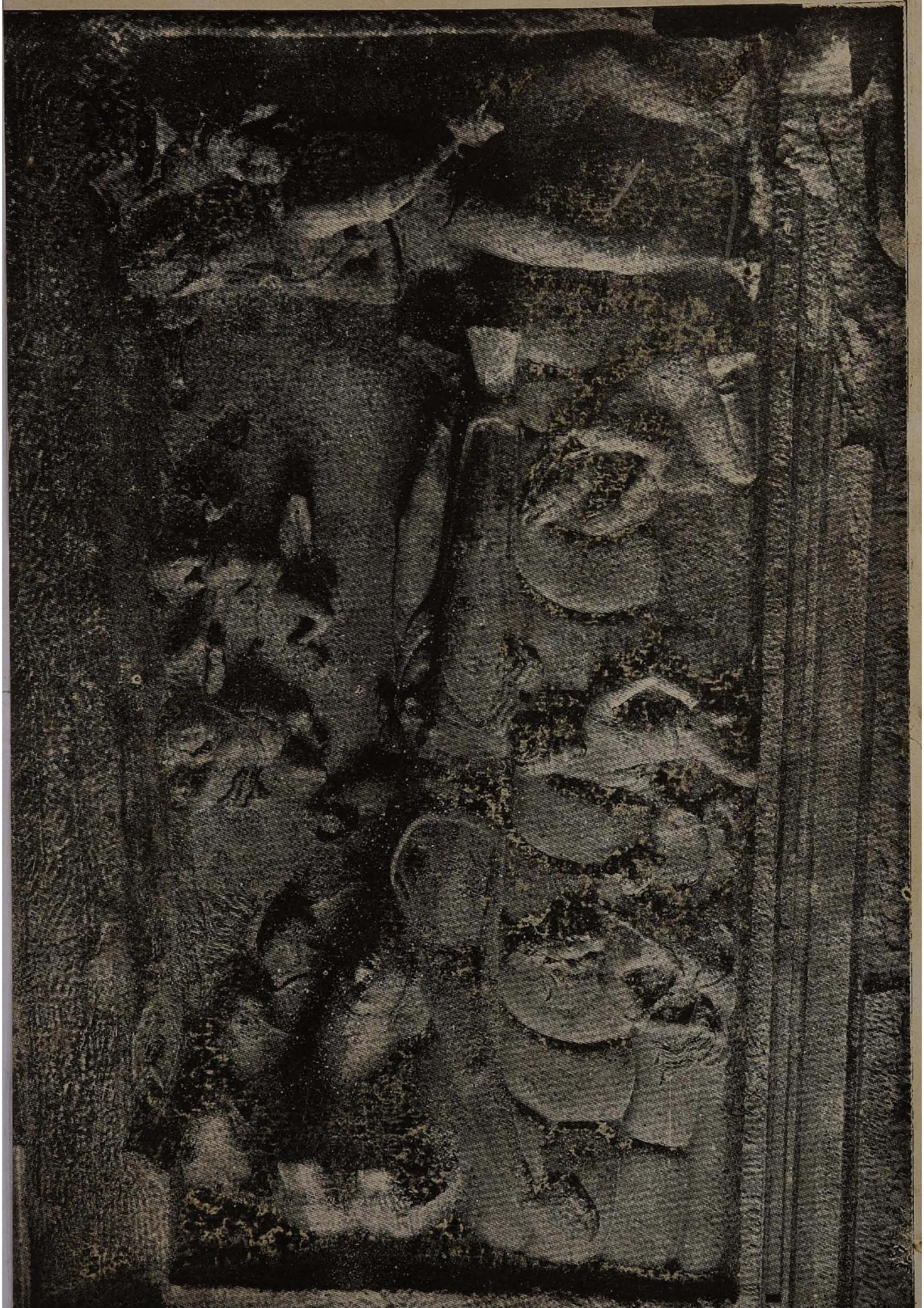
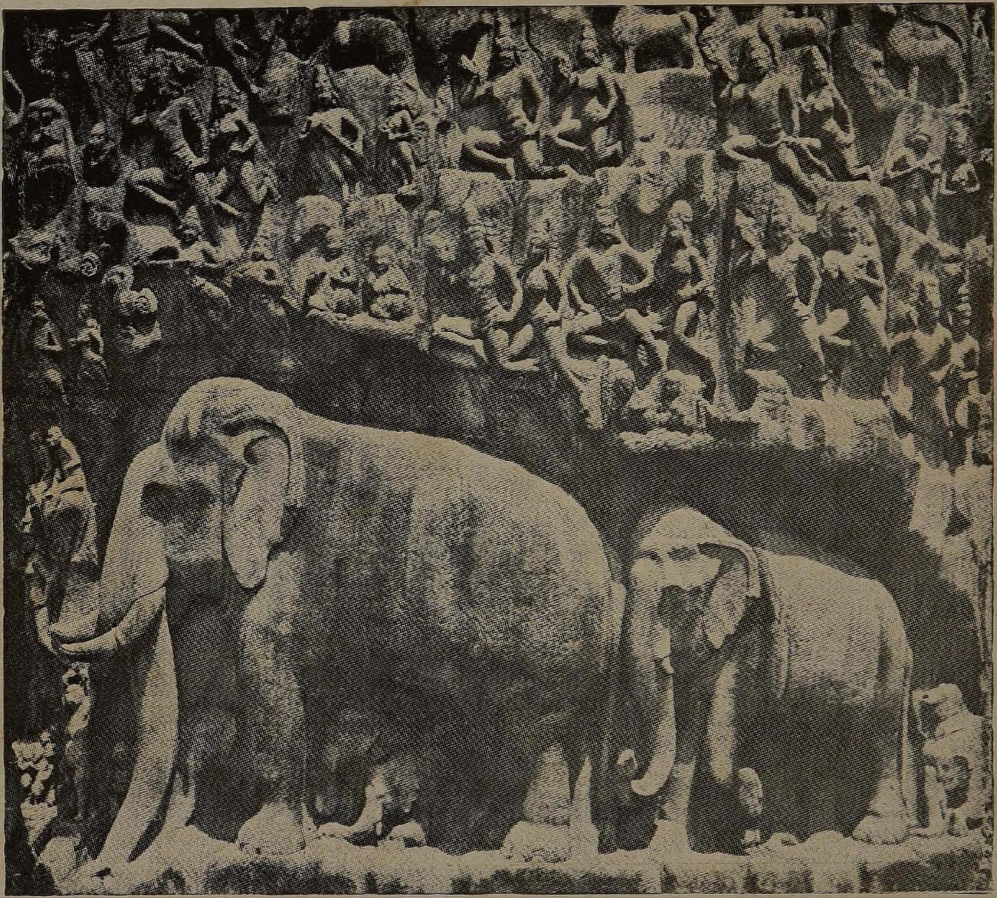
'The Curse of Kehama', and 'Idle Philosophical Observer of Madras Coast' (articles), Madras, 1962.

This is perhaps the grandest sculpture in Mamallapuram. On the north wall of the Mahishamardani mandapa is seen Devi going forth to war against the demon.



On the wall opposite is illustrated another passage from the 'Devi Mahatmyam' but depicting quiescence, instead of action. This is of Lord Anantasayana in His Cosmic sleep.

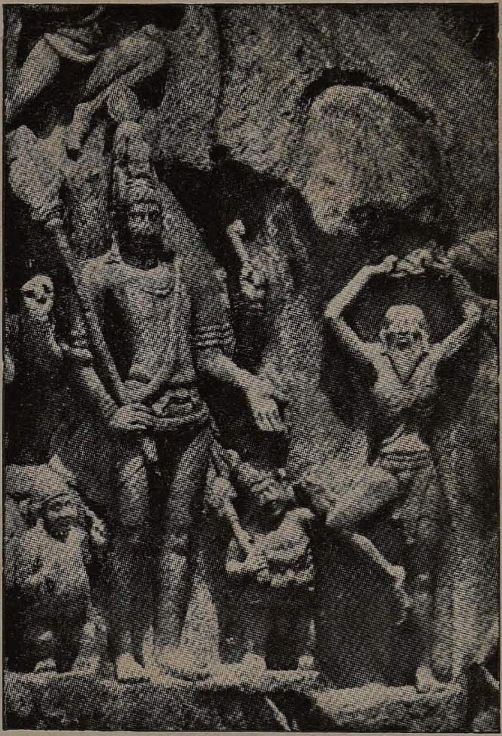


This and the six illustrations that follow are of facets from the "bas relief in open air" which depicts Arjuna's penance. The elephants of Mamallapuram are among the finest of Indian animal sculptures.

The sense of aerial locomotion is brought out effortlessly in this composition.

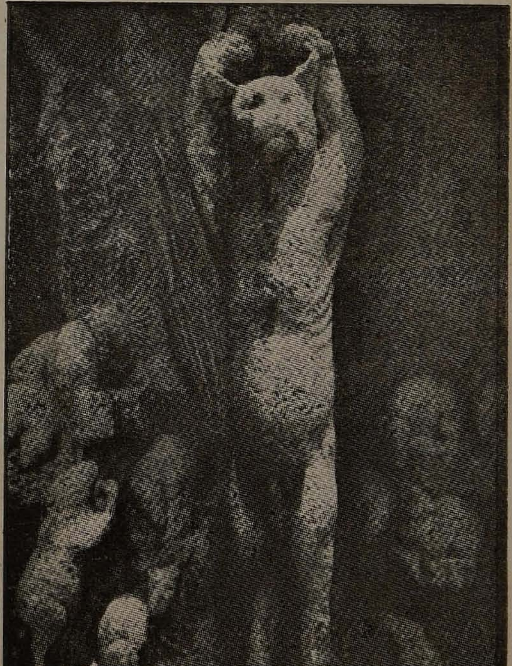
Two of the aerial passengers, Kinnaras

A roaring lion of Mamallapuram. The lion was the Pallava's heraldic beast.



The core of 'Arjuna's penance'. The emaciated Pandava is offering severe penance and to him comes Lord Siva.

The hypocritical cat will not be out done. It too offers penance, but its object is the foolish mice that trustingly cluster about it.

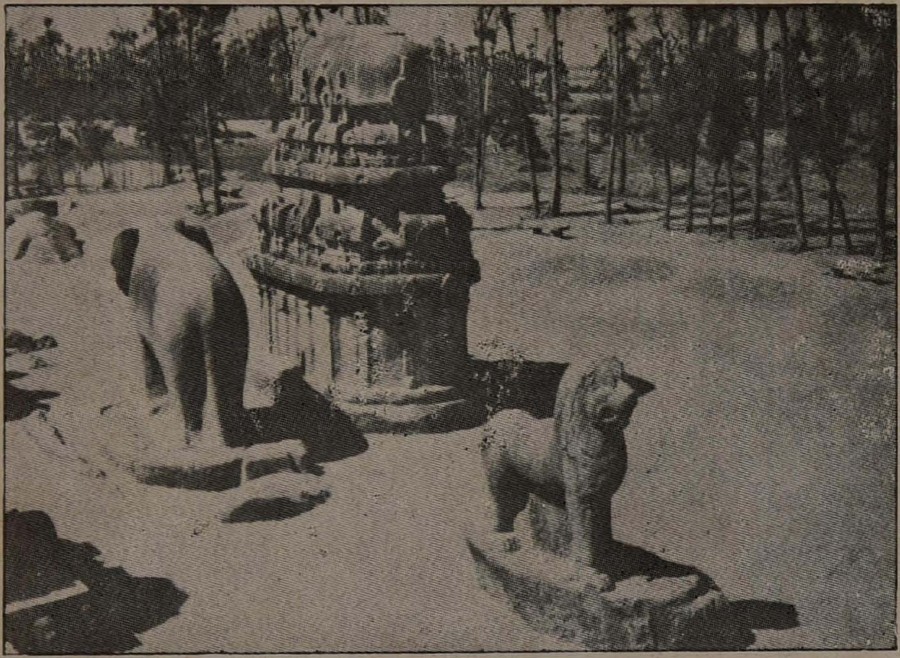


Some deers of Mamallapuram at rest.

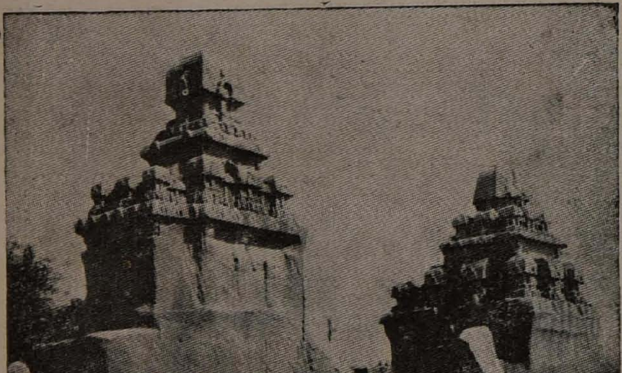
This is Lord Krishna holding up Mount Govardhana, the central part of the Krishna Mandapa.

In pastoral Gokulam here the Lord performed the miracle.

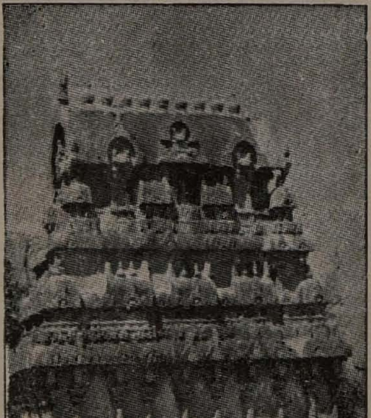
Most individual monuments at Mamallapuram are the rathas. The best known are those named after the Pandavas.



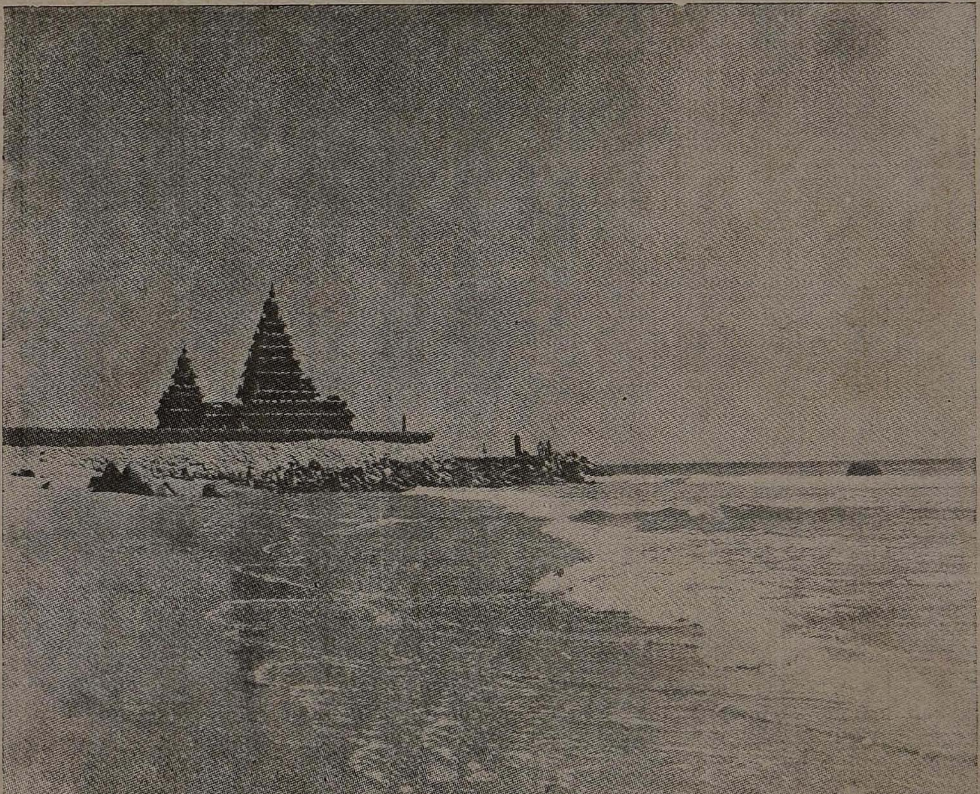
The Sahadeva ratha is set off by its neighbouring elephant. The lion stands in front of the Draupadi ratha (not in picture).



The two Pidari rathas are among the least finished of the Mamallapuram monuments



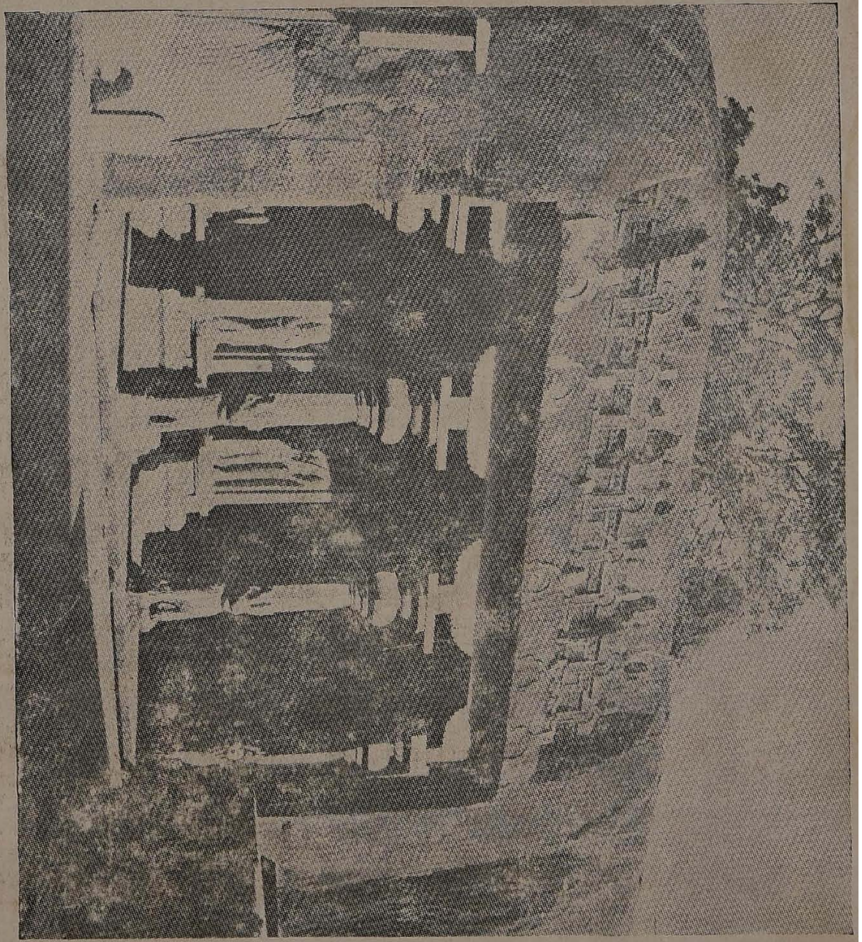
The ornate Ganesa ratha



This is the dream, the fantasy of Mamallapuram. Incredibly located on the very margin of the sea, the Shore temple is a lyric in stone.

The Somaskanda panel depicting Lord Siva and Goddess Parvathi, with Skanda between them was one of the objects of worship at Mamallapuram.

An essay in the horrific. The 'Tiger Cave' at Saluvankuppam.



The Varaha mandapa contains the sculpture of Bali's subjugation, the only link of the site with its popular but unhistorical name.